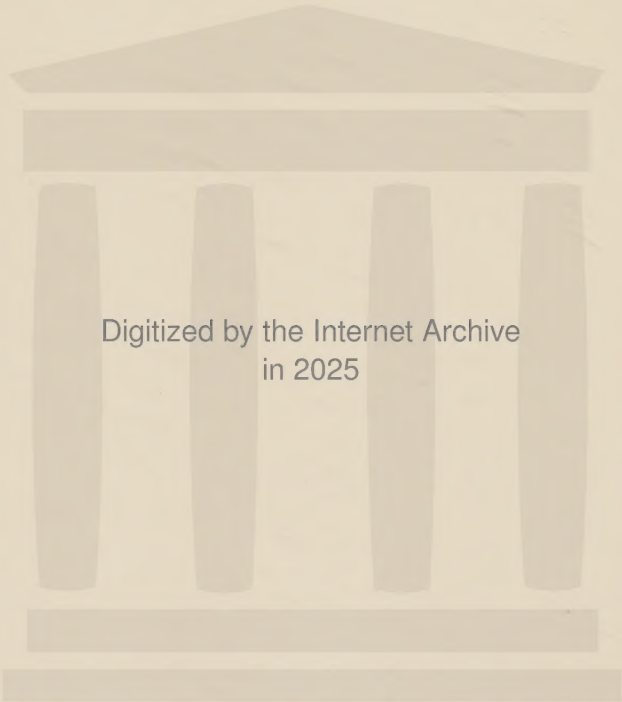
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IN ENGLAND'S AUGUSTAN AGE.

BY

W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

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April 1886.

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GOOD QUEEN ANNE;

OR,

Men and Manners, Life and Letters in the Augustan Age.

CHAPTER I.

MEN OF LETTERS.

Dean Swift—His Early Years—Sir William Temple—'The Battle of the Books'—Extraordinary Influence—Swift as a Politician—'Gulliver's Travels'—Hester Johnson—Vanessa—The Drapier Letters—Death and Character—Joseph Addison—His Farce of 'The Campaign'—As an Essayist—The Spectator—A Christian's Death—Sir Richard Steele—As a Soldier—'The Christian Hero'—His Plays—Some Letters to His Wife—Founds 'The Tatler' and 'The Spectator'—Steele as a Man and a Writer—His Death.

RISING head and shoulders above all his contemporaries, Dean Swift is, with the exception of Marlborough, the most conspicuous Englishman of his age; the man of the greatest intellectual power and force of character, as he was also the man with the saddest, the most melancholy story. A story which, as no one can read it without deep interest, so can no one think upon it without profound pity; for by how few and transient breaks of peace or happiness is it relieved, by how few of

the milder, tenderer virtues is it lighted up! It is the story of an uncontrolled ambition, which never gained its object; of a tremendous pride, which winced at every slight rebuff; of a heart which, like that of the victims in Beckford's tale of *Vathek*, was consumed by its internal fire; of an intellect which was stimulated to its most successful effort by the cynical scorn and fierce hatred with which it regarded humanity. It is the story of a life which had little hope and less faith; of an unending struggle which necessarily resulted in defeat, because it was directed against whatever is best and brightest in our human nature. With all the fame that settled upon it, with all the influence that crowned it, with all the forces of wit and satire which it commanded, the life of Swift was a failure, if failure is to be computed by the use to which a man puts his capabilities and opportunities. For it cannot be said of him that he consecrated those vast energies of his to the advocacy of any good or great cause. We cannot point to any one of his writings as furnishing hope, emulation, or encouragement to his fellow-men. We cannot recall him as ever teaching a solitary lesson of truth, or patience, or of that serene wisdom which enables us to endure with patience the shocks of adverse circumstance. He has savagely ridiculed human infirmities; he has never corrected them. From this point of view, if we place him by the side of Addison or Steele, how small, how mean he looks! As much as he excelled them in the wealth of his intellectual resource, so much did he fall below them in the use he made of it. We emphasise the fact that, with all his extraordinary powers, he wrote no line by which a man could be elevated or purified; contributed nothing to the world's treasures of love and hope and goodness. He was a great man, but, strange to say, a great man who did nothing great.

JONATHAN SWIFT, the son of an English attorney,

and the grandson of an English clergyman, was born in Dublin—whither his father had come to practise and to die, seven months before his son's birth—on the 30th of November 1667. When about a twelvemonth old, a curious experience befell him: his nurse, a Whitehaven woman, desiring to see a moribund relative, from whom she had expectations, but unwilling to leave her infant charge, for whom she had contracted a strong affection, stole away with him on shipboard, and secretly conveyed him to Whitehaven. There he remained for nearly three years; his mother, when the abduction was discovered, having sent directions that a second voyage should not be hazarded until he was better able to bear it. His nurse, be it said, conscientiously fulfilled her duties; so that, before the boy returned, he had learned to spell, and, at three years of age, could read any chapter in the Bible.

Though born in Ireland, Swift never called himself, nor would allow others to call him, an Irishman. In his satirical paper *On Barbarous Denominations in Ireland*, ironically commenting on the 'censure' so freely levelled at the Irish 'brogue,' he says:—'And what is worse, it is too well known that the bad consequence of this opinion affects those among us who are not the least liable to such reproaches, further than the misfortune of being born in Ireland, although of English parents, and whose education has been chiefly in that kingdom.' He was fond of repeating what he wrote to Lord Oxford in 1737; that he chanced to see the light there, was one year old when he left it first, and to his sorrow did not die before he went to it again. There was nothing Irish in his temperament or intellect, as, indeed, there could not very well be, when not a drop of Irish blood flowed in his veins.

At the early age of six Swift was removed from his mother's side, and, by order of an uncle who had something to do with the family affairs, was sent to the Ormonds' foundation school at Kilkenny, where, among

his schoolfellows, was William Congreve, the future dramatist, wit, and fine gentleman. Two anecdotes only are told of his school life, but both are characteristic. 'I remember,' he says, 'when I was a little boy, I felt a great fish at the end of my line, which I drew up almost on the ground; but it dropped in, and the disappointment vexes me to this very day, and I believe it was the type of all my future disappointments.' That great fish of a bishop's mitre, for instance, which he had at the end of his line, but could never land! Again—'When I was a schoolboy at Kilkenny, and in the lower form, I longed very much to have a horse of my own to ride on. One day I saw a poor man leading a very mangy lean horse out of the town, to kill him for the skin. I asked the man if he would sell him, which he readily consented to, upon my offering him somewhat more than the price of the hide, which was all the money I had in the world. I immediately got on him, to the great envy of some of my schoolfellows and to the ridicule of others, and rode him about the town. The horse soon tired, and lay down. As I had no stable to put him into, nor any money to pay for his sustenance, I began to find out what a foolish bargain I had made, and cried heartily for the loss of my cash, but the horse dying soon after on the spot, gave me some relief.' It is clear that Swift regarded these two exploits as pointing the moral of his later life. With all his intellect, it became his ill fortune to catch fish which he never landed, and to buy horses which died before he could ride them.

He was fourteen years old when, on the 24th of April, 1682, he was entered as a pensioner at Trinity College, Dublin. 'There,' he says, 'by the ill-treatment of his relations, he was so discouraged and sunk in his spirits that he too much neglected his academic studies, for some parts of which he had no great relish by nature, and turned himself to reading history and poetry: so that

when the time came for taking his degree of Bachelor of Arts, although he had lived with great regularity and due observance of the statutes, he was stopped of his degree for dulness and insufficiency; and at last hardly admitted, in a manner little to his credit, which is called in that college *speciali gratiâ*, on the 15th of February 1685, with four more on the same footing; and this discreditable mark, as I am told, stands upon record in their college registry.'

The truth is, that the studies then cultivated at the University were not of a nature to arouse his interest. The cobweb subtleties of the old logicians, Smeglesius, Kechermannus, Burgesdicius, and others, whose writings were as rococo as their names, disgusted his keen wit. He could find no satisfaction in their chaff and sawdust; and his tutor could never persuade him to study them, though to pass his degree examination it was essential he should attain to a general knowledge of the commentators who have darkened the meaning of Aristotle with a cloud of words. How he revenged himself upon them afterwards in describing the University of Laputa! It must be owned, however, that even to more congenial subjects he gave but little of his time. He read and wrote chiefly for amusement, and to dissipate that mental gloom of which he had already become the victim. But whenever or whatever he read, he contrived to accumulate a store of the most various information; and his ingenious and fertile intellect, confident in its means and resources, had conceived the idea, and sketched the plan of his *Tale of a Tub*. We are unable, it is true, to measure the real extent of Swift's learning: but if not profound, it must have been comprehensive. No doubt it was easily acquired, and we know that it was happily applied. To wide and deep scholarship he made no claim, nor have his biographers made one for him; but it is certain that with history and poetry he possessed a very intimate acquaintance.

Human nature, however, was the book he read most constantly and most thoroughly. In this sort of knowledge he was passed master.

Swift was by no means a model student while at college; his infractions of discipline were numerous, and his attacks on the authorities were more humorous than becoming. There are frequent evidences in his writings of his antipathy to his so-called Alma Mater, which he unquestionably left 'under a cloud.' In 1688, his uncle was prostrated in intellect, lost speech and memory, and became unable to take further charge of his nephew's interests. Swift repaired, therefore, to his mother at Leicester, who obtained for him an introduction into the family of Sir William Temple, the diplomatist, of 'Partition Treaty' fame, and a scholar and *littérateur* of no mean distinction. Through Sir William's generosity—which is unfairly underrated by some of Swift's biographers—he was sent to Oxford, where he was admitted at once to the degree of B.A., and afterwards to that of M.A. Before the close of 1689, he joined his patron at his country seat of Moor Park, near Farnham, engaged to act as amanuensis and reader, with a salary of twenty pounds a year. In later life he would tell of the quantity of books he read there, and how King William—a not infrequent visitor to the old statesman—taught him to eat asparagus in the Dutch fashion. A well-known passage in Thackeray's lecture on Swift describes in the darkest colours his ten years' apprenticeship at Moor Park and Sheen—Sir William's other residence. It was here, he says, that this great and lonely Swift 'wore a cassock that was only not a livery—bent down a knee as proud as Lucifer's to supplicate my lady's good graces, or run on his honour's errands. It was here, as he was writing at Temple's table, or following his patron's walk, that he saw and heard the men who had governed the great world—measured himself with them, looking up from his silent corner, gauged their brains,

weighed their wits, turned them and tried them, and marked them. Ah! what platitudes he must have heard! what feeble jokes! what pompous commonplaces! what small men they must have seemed under those enormous periwigs, to the swarthy, uncouth, silent Irish secretary. I wonder whether it ever struck Temple, that that Irishman was his master? I suppose that dismal conviction did not present itself under the ambrosial wig, or Temple could never have lived with Swift. Swift sickened, rebelled, left the service—ate humble pie and came back again; and so for ten years went on, gathering learning, swallowing scorn, and submitting, with a stealthy rage, to his fortune.'

This is very picturesque and impressive; but singularly unjust. It is written from the stand-point of one who knows Swift as the author of *The Tale of a Tub*, and *Gulliver's Travels*, as the greatest satirist whom England, or the world, has produced. But no such knowledge was possible to Temple. To him Swift was a young man who had not done very well at college,—who owed his position to Sir William's bounty; a young man, no doubt, of very considerable gifts, but of a morose and cynical temper—and not, perhaps, an eminently desirable member in a well-regulated household. I can find no evidence that he was treated either with unkindness or discourtesy; on the whole, I should say that Swift himself furnishes evidence to the contrary. His references to Sir William breathe none of that fierce indignation and contempt which he poured out on all who had provoked or offended or neglected him. He speaks of him as that 'great man,' that 'good and great person,' and I do not see why, in thus speaking, he should not have been sincere. It is well to remember that Swift, when he first went to Moor Park, was only twenty-two; and that Sir William Temple, a man who had discharged important public trusts, and seen much of cities, men, and manners, might

reasonably expect a certain amount of deference from his young *protégé*. For my part, I have no doubt at all that Swift learned much under Temple's roof. Temple was an exact and elegant scholar; he was also, as I have hinted, a man of wide and varied experience; and in this double capacity he must have been useful to the young secretary, who, under that calm exterior of his, concealed so much pride and ambition, and such a yearning after power.

Living in the refined atmosphere of Moor Park, it was natural enough that Swift should attempt the practice of poetical composition, though few great men have ever had less of the essential elements of true poetry in their genius. As early as May 1689, he had penned *An Ode to Dr William Sancroft, late Lord Bishop of Canterbury*, the earliest indication of his High Church tendencies. This was followed by *An Ode to Sir William Temple*, and in 1691, by his *Ode to the Athenian Society*, which having been shown to Dryden (whose aunt had married Swift's grandfather), elicited from him the emphatic verdict,—'Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet.' It is characteristic of Swift that he avenged himself for this criticism by slandering Dryden's poetical reputation. In *The Battle of the Books*, he says, when speaking of the moderns, that 'the difference was greatest among the horse, where every private trooper pretended to the command, from Tasso and Milton to Dryden and Wither.' And, again, in *Poetry, a Rhapsody*, he advises the poetaster to—

> 'Read all the Prefaces of Dryden,
> For these our critics much confide in,
> Though merely writ, at first for filling,
> To raise the volume's price a shilling.'

For that noble translation of Virgil, which will live as long as the original, he has none but degrading images:—'This version-maker,' he says, 'is so lost in Virgil, that he is

like the lady in a lobster; a mouse under a canopy of state; a shrivelled beau within the pent-house of a full-bottomed periwig.' Yet his keen critical insight must have told him that Dryden's judgment rang with a true prophecy.

Of the fulsome panegyric upon the Athenian Society, whose Apollo was the 'cracked-brained' scribbler and bookseller, John Denton, Swift must afterwards have been ashamed. These imitative exercises—for they were nothing better—and some verses addressed to Congreve, in November 1693, and, in the following December, a congratulation to Sir William Temple on his 'late illness and recovery,' represent the sum of his poetical achievement at Moor Park. In the last-named seethes that savage cynicism, that morbid bitterness of spirit, which became the curse of Swift through all his melancholy life. Apostrophising his Muse, as was then the custom, he exclaims:—

> 'Wert thou right woman, thou should'st scorn to look
> On an abandoned wretch by hopes forsook;
> Forsook by hopes, ill fortune's last relief,
> Assigned for life to unremitting grief;
> For, let Heaven's wrath enlarge these weary days,
> If hope e'er dawns the smallest of its rays.
> Time o'er the happy takes so swift a flight,
> And treads so soft, so easy, and so light,
> That we, the wretched, creeping far behind,
> Can scarce th' impression of his footsteps find.'

For eight years Swift studied with invincible diligence—not less, he says, than eight hours a day—and, by this excessive application, as much as by the surfeit of fruit which he himself speaks of as the cause, induced a severe illness and a tendency to vertigo, indicative of some obscure brain disease, which afflicted him for the remainder of his life. He went on a brief visit to Ireland by way of a restorative, but did not benefit by it; returned

to Moor Park; and, when he eventually recovered, resumed the company of his beloved books.

About this time Temple, who had begun to recognise his kinsman's gifts of mind and force of character, admitted him to much of his confidence; and he was present at the interviews between William III. and his trusted servant. Temple, when he was laid up with the gout, employed him to lay his views on questions of public polity before the King, and commissioned him to enforce them by illustrations drawn from English history. William viewed with alarm a bill which had been introduced to make Parliaments triennial; and Swift was commissioned to dispel, if possible, this apprehension. 'The Secretary,' says Macaulay, 'was a poor scholar of four or five-and-twenty, under whose plain garb and ungainly deportment were concealed some of the choicest gifts that have ever been bestowed on the children of men; rare powers of observation, brilliant wit, grotesque invention, humour of the most austere flavour, yet exquisitely delicious; eloquence singularly pure, manly and perspicuous.' From Swift's personal narrative we borrow some particulars of the deliberations at Kensington. William's anxiety about the Triennial Parliaments Bill arose from his recollection that a similar bill had been passed by Charles I., and Swift endeavoured to dispel it by pointing out that the downfall of the Stuart could not possibly have any connection with a bill which did not limit the royal prerogative, but that it resulted from another by which he was prohibited from dissolving the then existing Parliament without its own consent. The Secretary's arguments, however, fell to the ground; and William refused his assent to the bill. 'This was the first time that Mr Swift had ever any converse with Courts, and he told his friends it was the first incident that helped to cure him of vanity.' He refused a proffered captaincy of dragoons, and apparently the King could find no other way of rewarding him. So he continued his calm

life at Moor Park, educating little Hester Johnson, and, in the consciousness of intellectual power, chafing against the narrow limits of the stage to which he was confined, and the smallness of the character which had been given him to play.

Hester Johnson, with whom was associated so much of the romance and mystery of Swift's life, was the daughter of Sir William Temple's steward[1]—a charming, dark-eyed girl, who, as she grew up, was employed to wait on Lady Gifford, Sir William's sister. She was only seven years old when the young secretary first appeared at Moor Park, so that there was a difference of fourteen or fifteen years between them.

Between Temple and Swift a serious disagreement at length broke out. Temple fully appreciated the value of his secretary's services, and was in no hurry to deprive himself of them by making provision for his independent livelihood. When Swift at last rebelled, Temple offered him a small post, worth one hundred pounds a year, in the Irish Rolls Office, of which he himself was master. Swift replied, that as his refusal of this offer would preclude the reproach that he went into the Church for a maintenance, he was resolved at last to go to Ireland and take holy orders. They parted on angry terms; but Temple did not refuse the ex-secretary a certificate of conduct, as required by the bishop to whom he had applied. His deacon's orders are dated October 28, 1694, and his priest's orders January 13, 1695.

This new strange member of the clerical brotherhood was presented by Lord Capel, then Lord Deputy, to the small benefice of Kilroot, which lay in the north of Ireland, and was worth something more than one hundred pounds a year. There he had little to do, so far as the care of souls was concerned, and he employed his leisure in making love

[1] Or, it was hinted, of Sir William himself; a suspicion confirmed by her face, her dress, and the indulgence with which she was treated.

to the sister of an old college friend, named Waring, who lived at Belfast. Wearying before long of his wild Irish solitude, he listened, not unwillingly, to an entreaty from Sir William Temple that he would resume his duties at Moor Park. It was early in 1696 when he began his second period of residence; and Hetty Johnson, whom he had first known as a child of seven, had developed into a comely maiden of fifteen. According to Swift, she was one of the most beautiful, graceful, and agreeable young women in London,—only a little too fat. 'Her hair was blacker than a raven, and every feature of her face in perfection. Never was any of her sex born with better gifts of the mind, or who more improved them by reading and conversation.' The relations of pupil and teacher which had previously existed between her and Swift seem to have been renewed, but necessarily on terms approaching to a closer equality, and with the infusion of a new element of passion and feeling.

Until Temple's death, in January 1699, Swift remained in his service. On the whole, their friendship seems to have been honourable to both: on Swift's side it was controlled, I think, by a sincere respect for the aged and illustrious scholar-statesman, who had treated him so kindly; on Temple's, by a perception of the rare powers and rugged virtues that, debased by much alloy, lay partly concealed beneath his secretary's reserved exterior. Nor could Temple be otherwise than conscious of the great service rendered him by Swift in the famous controversy respecting the comparative merit of the Ancient and Modern Writers. Considering his tastes and pursuits, it was natural enough that Temple should espouse the side of the Ancients, and he rushed into the *mêlée* with an *Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning*, which betrayed his superficial knowledge of the classics whom he so warmly defended. Some of his illustrations were absurd, others inaccurate. Thus, he referred to the so-called

Epistles of Phalaris (Tyrant, or ruler, of Agrigentum, B.C. 565) as the best in the world, and expatiated with much unction on their admirable qualities. As his essay was written with much grace, it became very popular, and the panegyric on Phalaris induced the scholars of Christ Church, Oxford, to issue a new edition, under the charge of the Hon. Charles Boyle. While it was passing through the press a quarrel arose between Mr Boyle and the King's Librarian, Richard Bentley, the greatest of European scholars. Boyle, in his preface to the *Epistles*, had the temerity to attack the celebrated critic, who revenged himself by convincingly demonstrating that the *Epistles* were forgeries, and not particularly skilful ones. You will find his learned argument prefixed to the 1697 edition of William Wotton's *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*.

Bentley, as might be expected, treated Temple, whose scholarship was of the *petit maître* order, with scant respect; but the retired diplomatist was too shrewd to cross swords with so formidable an adversary. Christ Church, however, supplied him with a defender. A reply appeared—bearing the name of Boyle, but really written by Atterbury, with the assistance of some fellow-undergraduates. It was entitled *Dr Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris, and the Fables of Æsop, Examined* (1698). Macaulay characterises it as a remarkable book, which reminds one of Goldsmith's observation that the French would be the best cooks in the world if they had any butcher's meat, for they can make two dishes out of a nettle-top. It really deserves the praise, whatever that praise may be worth, of being the best book ever written by any man on the wrong side of a question of which he was profoundly ignorant. It was then that Swift bestrode the battered body of his patron, and produced in his defence *The Battle of the Books*, which, though circulated only in manuscript—for it was not

printed until some years afterwards—convulsed the town with its ingenious satire and easy humour. In this admirable Homeric burlesque, William Wotton, the self-constituted champion of Modern Learning, is represented as the son of the evil deity, called Criticism, and enrolled in the army of the Moderns under a captain named Bentley. This captain is described as tall, but without shape or comeliness; large, but without strength or proportion; and as clothed in armour made up of a thousand ill-assorted pieces. His helmet was of old rusty iron; but the vizor was of brass, which, tainted by his breath, corrupted into copperas, nor wanted gall from the same fountain, so that, whenever provoked by anger or labour, an atramentous fluid of most malignant nature distilled from his lips. Bentley and Wotton together plan an attack upon a neglected quarter of the Ancients, and at the Spring of Helicon, one of the prizes of Parnassus for which the struggle is being waged, encounter Temple, General of the Allies to the Ancients, who, having been educated and having long command among them, is, of all the Moderns, their prime favourite. A fierce affray ensues, in which Temple transfixes both the Moderns with his lance, like a brace of woodcocks trussed on a spit. In the struggle Temple is slightly grazed, though he remains unconscious of the wound (a delicate stroke of satire, by which Swift ingeniously conveys his opinion that his patron's position was not altogether impregnable).

Meantime, the exploits of Homer are on a scale so colossal as almost to decide without extraneous aid the field in favour of the Ancients. Mounted on a ferocious horse, which scarcely any rider but himself can manage, he bears down all before him. I have no space to spare for the names of his victims; but must note that the French writers are most terribly mauled. Perrault, plucked from his saddle by the Greek poet's mighty arm, is hurled at Fontenelle, and the shock dashes out the brains of

both. Next to Homer in efficiency of valour is Virgil, who, bestriding a dapple-grey steed of the highest spirit and strength, careers over the field in search of antagonists ; and lo, upon a sorrel gelding of monstrous proportions, appears a foe who makes much more noise than speed. His horse, lank and aged, spends the dregs of his vigour in a high trot, which, though it covers but little of the ground, produces a clang and clash of arms, quite terrible to hear. On the stranger's approach Virgil is disappointed to recognise in him his own translator, 'the renowned Dryden, whose head lies far back in a helmet nine times too big for it.' Near Dryden rides the physician-poetaster, Sir Richard Blackmore, who would fall before Lucan's spear if Esculapius, unseen, did not turn aside the point—a compliment to Blackmore's physic, and a gird at his verse, which the ponderous composer of *King Arthur: an Epic in Twelve Books*, did not fail to resent.

In this remarkable piece of humoristic fancy and allegorical satire—the idea of which was borrowed, of course, from Boileau's *Le Latrin*—you will find scarcely a line without some inner meaning or allusive touch. 'If a single word,' says Forster, 'were to be employed in describing it, applicable alike to its wit and its extravagance, *intensity* should be chosen. Especially characteristic of these earliest satires is what generally will be found most aptly descriptive of all Swift's writing : namely, that whether the subject be great or small, everything in it, from the first word to the last, is essentially part of it ; not an episode or allusion being introduced merely for itself, but every minutest point not only harmonising or consisting with the whole, but expressly supporting and strengthening it.'

Some idea of Swift's industry as a reader may be gathered from a memorandum of books read by him in a single twelvemonth—namely, from January 1697 to

January 1698. No doubt, some of our readers—especially if they subscribe to Mudie's—can produce a longer list as the result of their year's work; but then there are readers and readers — there are those who skim through their volumes as Camilla bounds o'er the plain, and there are those who penetrate into them as laboriously as the roots of the oak into the soil it feeds upon. And there are books and books: books as light and unsubstantial as the froth of the waves, and books as wholesome and nutritious as the manna which fed the children of Israel in the wilderness. Swift not only read, but he assimilated: and the books which he made his own were not of the kind that figure in the monthly 'lists' of our great circulating libraries. There is a catalogue which may well put to shame the degenerate student of the present day. Among the classics:—Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil (twice), Horace, Lucretius (thrice), Lucius Florus, Petronius Arbiter, the first volume of Ælian, the *Epistles* of Cicero, and the *Characters* of Theophrastus (each of them thrice). In English:—Hobbes's translation of Thucydides, Lord Herbert's *History of Henry VII.*, Camden's *Reign of Elizabeth*, and Bishop Burnet's *History of the Reformation*. He also made abstracts of Sleidan's *Commentary on the Reformation*, Fra Paolo da Sarpi's *History of the Council of Trent*, and the treatises of Cyprian, Irenæus, and Diodorus Siculus, besides several volumes of *Voyages and Travels*; and, among French books, Voiture, the Comte de Gabalis, *Histoire de Chypre*, Bernier's *Grand Mogul*, and others. Temple's *Memoirs* and *Introduction to History*, Sir John Davies's noble poem on *The Immortality of the Soul*, two volumes of Fontenelle's *Dialogues of the Dead*, and Jeremy Collier's *Essays*. This formidable list is explained by Mr Dean Swift's statement that his illustrious kinsman 'from the time he went to Sir William Temple in 1688, until the death of Sir William in 1699, spent ten hours a day in hard study, abating only the time which he consumed in

bodily exercise, for every two hours he ran up a hill that was near Sir William Temple's, and back again to the study: this exercise he performed in about six minutes: backwards and forwards it was about half a mile.'

Swift's poetical work during this period was good of its kind. It comprised the *Lines written in a Lady's Ivory Table-Book*, and *Mrs Frances Harris's Petition*, each of which is distinguished by a peculiar view of thought and turn of fancy. The latter (written in 1699) has a special interest as the earliest example of the regularly irregular burlesque verse of which he was the inventor; the lines being without any definite metrical structure, but terminating with rhymes, and moving with what we may call an anapæstic lilt. As thus:—

'To their Excellencies the Lords Justices of Ireland, the humble petition of Frances Harris,
Who must starve and die a maid if it miscarries;
Humbly sheweth, that I went to warm myself in Lady Betty's chamber, because I was cold;
And I had in a purse seven pounds four shillings and sixpence, besides farthings, in money and gold;
So, because I had been buying things for my lady last night,
I was resolved to tell my money, to see if it was right.
Now, you must know, because my trunk has a very bad lock,
Therefore all the money I have, which, God knows, is a very small stock,
I keep in my pocket, tied about my middle, next my smock.
So when I went to put up my purse, as God would have it, my smock was unripped,
And instead of putting it into my pocket, down it slipped.'

My sketch of this first part of Swift's unhappy life I close with his *Resolutions to be kept when I come to be Old*, which were written in 1699—probably when he was on the point of leaving Temple's service. They seem to me to let in as much light on the dark places of his wayward nature as any of his writings:—

Not to marry a young woman.
Not to keep young company, unless they really desire it.

Not to be peevish, or morose, or suspicious.

Not to scorn present ways, or acts, or fashions, or men, or war, etc.

Not to be fond of children [or let them come near me hardly].

Not to tell the same story over and over to the same people.

Not to be covetous.

Not to neglect decency or cleanliness, for fear of falling into nastiness.

Not to be over severe with young people, but give allowance for their youthful follies and weaknesses.

Not to be influenced by, or give ear to, knavish talking servants, or others.

Not to be too free of advice, nor trouble any but those that desire it.

To desire some good friends to inform me which of these resolutions I break or neglect, and wherein; and reform accordingly.

Not to talk much, nor of myself.

Not to boast of my former beauty, or strength, or favour with ladies, etc.

Not to hearken to flatteries, nor conceive I can be beloved by a young woman. *Et eos qui hæreditatem captant, odisse ac vitare.*

Not to be positive or opinionative.

Not to set up for observing all these rules, for fear I should observe none.

Shortly after Sir William's death, Swift received and accepted an invitation to accompany to Ireland the Earl of Berkeley, one of the Lords Justices, as chaplain and private secretary. But a Mr Bushe had fixed upon the latter post for himself, and having by arts and insinuations contrived to obtain it, Lord Berkeley, by way of recompense, promised his chaplain the first good church-living that fell vacant. The promise, however, was not fulfilled, as Bushe interposed, claiming a fee of a thousand pounds; and Swift was relegated eventually to the small rectory of Agher and vicarage of Laracor, worth together about two hundred and thirty pounds per annum. In the following year, however, he was gratified with the prebend of Dunlavin (in St Patrick's, Dublin), which raised his yearly income to a total—at the then value of money—of about four hundred pounds. He continued to hold his chap-

laincy, and the intimate intercourse into which he was thrown with members of the Berkeley family seems to have inspired him with feelings of respect and regard. For the amusement of the daughters of the house he composed numerous *jeux d'esprit*—light and playful *vers de societé*, in which his powerful intellect displayed its plasticity and sportiveness. Upon Lady Berkeley he played a venial practical joke. The good lady was fond of requesting him to read aloud to her the Honourable Mr Boyle's tedious *Meditations*—the parent of a prolific progeny of common-place *Reflections*, *Essays concerning this and that and the other*, *Desultory Thoughts*, and so on. Wearying of their monotonous trivialities, Swift wrote in imitation of them his *Meditation on a Broomstick*, and easily imposed it upon Lady Berkeley as a chapter from the great original.

Some portion of his time Swift spent at Laracor, where he thoroughly repaired the vicarage, and found an outlet for his energy in improving the church and glebe. He laid out an extensive garden, having for its boundary a small stream, of which (says Mr Forster) he so enlarged the current and levelled the banks as to turn it into a canal, in the Dutch style, that Moor Park had made pleasant to his memory; and along the pretty winding walk, formed by the side of it, he planted regular ranks of willows in double rows. His life was a pattern of the strictest clerical decorum; he preached regularly on the Sundays, and read prayers every Wednesday and Friday. On the first of these Wednesday services, the vicar, it is said, found that the congregation consisted only of his clerk: whereupon, 'with great composure and gravity,' though somewhat irreverently, he began:—'Dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth you and me in sundry places,' and so went through the whole service. On Sundays, the church was well frequented, and Swift soon attained a considerable reputation as a preacher, inquiries being

made of his faithful clerk, Roger Coxe, whether the vicar was 'to preach that Sunday.'

On the 16th of February 1700, Swift took his D.D. degree at Dublin. Early in April he attended the Berkeleys to England, the Earl having been recalled on the success of the Tory party in the General Election. When the news had reached Dublin that the victorious Tories had impeached the four great Whig leaders, Lords Somers, Oxford, Halifax, and Portland, for their share in the Partition Treaty, Swift had remarked to the Earl, that the same manner of proceeding had ruined the liberties of Athens and Rome. Taking this as his text, he wrote and published in London, but anonymously, a pungent political treatise under the title of *The Contests and Diversions of the Nobles and Commons in Athens and Rome, with the consequences they had upon those States*, which at once engaged the attention of the reading public. Its authorship was first ascribed to Lord Somers, and afterwards to Bishop Burnet, who, to avert the threatened resentment of the House of Commons, hastened to disown it publicly.

During his visit to England, he made a journey to Farnham, where he found Hester Johnson settled with her friend Mrs Dingley. Her parents were dead, and she was living on the interest of her modest fortune, then valued at one thousand five hundred pounds, equal now-a-days to at least three times that amount. Swift informed her that she could live more economically in Ireland, and urged her, by her profound regard for him, to remove to that country, and invest her money in the Irish funds. Accordingly, she gave up her house at Farnham, and moved over to Dublin. Thenceforward, when Swift was in England, the two ladies used his Dublin residence; when he returned, they went into lodgings of their own. So, too, at Laracor, the vicarage was theirs while he was absent; when he was in residence, they were either his guests, or occupied apartments in the neighbouring

town of Trim, or dwelt in a little farm cottage near Knightsbrook Gate, half-a-mile from Laracor, the site of which is marked on the Ordnance Survey by the fond name which Swift appropriated to Hester Johnson—the immortal name of *Stella*. With a soft and serene light shone that 'Star' on the gloom of his great despairing intellect; it was almost the only ray of tenderness which illuminated his dark and lonely life.

By this time the intimacy between Swift and Stella had undoubtedly ripened into a strong and even passionate attachment; and why this attachment was not consecrated by marriage is one of the mysteries of Swift's career. Apparently no real obstacle existed to their union—a union by which both had much to gain. Scott thinks it highly probable that between them existed a tacit understanding that it was to be completed when Swift's income, according to the prudential scheme which he had unhappily adopted, should be adequate to the expense of a matrimonial establishment. But this explanation can hardly be accepted, in face of the fact that the joint income of Swift and Hester Johnson would not have been less than five hundred and fifty or six hundred pounds a year, besides the Laracor parsonage, and there is no reason to think that Swift considered this inadequate. Did any physical or constitutional reason stand in the way? The mystery cannot now be solved; but what is certain is that the breaks of happiness which flashed across the despondency of his spirit Swift owed to his Stella. So far as he was capable of love, he loved her. The sincerity of those charming little notes of which he wrote to her so many cannot be questioned, and it is pleasant to see this mighty and savage satirist indulging in the playfulness of 'his little language'—stooping to the most delightful childish nonsense—piling epithet upon epithet of the fondest character imaginable. Thus we have 'Good night, M.D.; Night, M.D.; Little M.D.; Stellakins; Pretty Stella;

Dear, roguish, impudent, pretty M.D.' He wrote to his Stella daily, both night and morning. As soon as he had despatched the day's letter, he began another; just as if he felt her 'kind little hand' in his, and could not let it go. He conjures up the prettiest pictures of what she is doing, and where she is, and dotes and dreams over them, and revels in his pleasurable fancies. He describes the various scenes in which he has occasion to figure; places before her all his hopes, fears, ambitions, disappointments. He coins new terms of endearment for her; she is generally his 'Ppt' or 'Poppet,' while he himself is a 'Pdfr' (poor dear, foolish, rogue). He takes her letters from beneath his pillow, and talks to them and pets them as he would talk to and pet their writer—scarcely as a lover, but more like a caressing and protecting brother. He felt and knew that all the sunshine which life held for his darkened mind radiated from this pure, sweet, artless, and loving woman,—radiated from her self-sacrifice, her generous devoted affection. And so, when he had the misfortune to outlive her, remembering her grace and kindness and inexhaustible tenderness, he flung upon her grave a wreath of immortelles, which breathes a true poetic fragrance. We can well believe that the hot tears dimmed those wonderful blue eyes of his as he wrote:—

'When on my sickly couch I lay,
Impatient both of night and day,
And groaning in unmanly strains,
Called every power to ease my pains,
Then Stella ran to my relief,
With cheerful face and inward grief;
And though by Heaven's severe decree
She suffers hourly more than me,
No cruel master could require
From slaves employed for daily hire,
What Stella, by her friendship warmed,
With vigour and delight performed.'

The *Journal* belongs to a later period than that

which our narrative has reached; but we shall take some extracts from it here which bear upon the subject of the relations between this strange couple:—

December 3, 1710.—Pshaw, I must be writing to those dear saucy brats every night, whether I will or no; let me have what business I will, or come home ever so late, or be ever so sleepy: but it is an old saying and a true one—

'Be you lords or be you earls,
You must write to naughty girls.'

I was to-day at Court, and saw Raymond [an Irish friend] among the beef-eaters, staying to see the Queen: so I put him in a better station, made two or three dozen bows, and went to church, and then to Court again to pick up a dinner, as I did with Sir John Stanley; and then we went to visit Lord Mountjoy, and just left him: and 'tis near eleven at night, young woman, and methinks this letter comes very near to the bottom. . . .

February 23, 1711-2.—I am going out, and must carry ziz in my Pottick to give it at some general post-house. I will talk further with oo at night. I suppose in my next I shall answer a letter from MD that will be sent me. On Tuesday it will be four weeks since I had your last. . . . Farewell, mine dulest rip dulest char Ppt, MD MD MD Ppt, FW, Lele MD, ME, ME, ME, ME, ME adieu, FW MD, Lazy Dous, Lele, Lele, all a Lele.

March 7, 1711-2.—I am weary of business and ministers. I don't go to a coffee-house twice a month. I am very regular in going to sleep before eleven. And so you say that Stella's a pretty girl; and so she be; and methinks I see her just now, as handsome as the day is long. Do you know what? When I am writing in our language, I make up my mouth just as if I was speaking it. I caught myself at it just now. . . . Poor Stella, won't Dingley leave her a little daylight to write to Presto? Well, well, we'll have daylight shortly, spite of her teeth; and zoo must cry Zele, and Hele, and Hele adieu. Must loo immitate Pdfr, pray? Iss, and so loo shall. And so leles foll ce rattle. Dood Mollow. [You must cry, There and Here and Here again. Must you imitate Pdfr, pray? Yes, and so you shall. And so there's for the letter. Good morrow.]

March 21, 1711-2.—Now I will answer MD's Rattle [letter] No. 27. You that are adding to your number and grumbling, had made it 26, and then cobbled it to 27. . . . O, the sorry jade, with her excuses of a fortnight at Baligall, seeing their friends, and landlord running away. . . . O Rord, but a scuffle and a bustle!

. . . Bed ee paadon, Maram ; I'm drad 'oo rike ze aplon [I'm glad you like the apron] ; no harm, I hope. And so, Maram, MD wonders she has not a letter at the day ; we'll have it soon, mum. . . . Iss, faith, it is delightful to hear that Ppt is every way Ppt now. . . . I wish I were now in my garden at Laracor. Hold oor tongue, oo Ppt, about colds at Moor Park. The case is quite different. . . . Dood mollows, michar sellahs. [Good morrow, my charming fellows.] . . . Nite, my own two dulest sawcy dee lit ones.

In 1702 Swift was again in London, where he began to frequent Button's famous coffee-house, the favourite resort of the wits and men of letters of the time. An eye-witness has taken note of the sensation caused by his eccentric appearance. Ambrose Phillips—'Namby-pamby,' as he has disrespectfully been called—the poet of 'the Pastorals'—tells us how Addison and himself and others had for several successive days watched with curious eyes the movements of a strange clergyman, who seemed entirely unacquainted with any of its *habitués*. It was his custom to lay down his hat on a table, and walk backward and forward at a good pace for half an hour or an hour, without speaking to any mortal, or seeming in the least to attend to anything that was going forward. Then he would take up his hat, pay his money at the bar, and walk away as silently as he came. After having observed this singular behaviour for some time, they concluded that he was suffering from mental derangement, and nicknamed him among themselves 'the mad parson.' It was natural, therefore, that they should regard his actions with particular attention ; and one evening they saw him cast his eyes several times on a gentleman in boots, who was evidently fresh from the country, and at last move towards him as if to address him. All were eager to hear what the mad parson had to say, as he had never before broken his silence ; and, rising from their seats, they gathered around him. Abruptly accosting the rustic stranger, Swift inquired, 'Pray, sir, do you

remember any good weather in the world?' The country gentleman, after staring a little at the singularity of his manner and the oddity of his question, answered, 'Yes, sir, I thank God that I remember a good deal of good weather in my time.' 'That is more,' rejoined Swift, 'than I can say; I never remember any weather that was not too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry; but however God Almighty contrives it, at the end of the year 'tis all very well.' Whereupon he took up his hat, and, without uttering another syllable, or taking the least notice of anyone, walked out into the street; leaving the spectators of this singular scene open-mouthed with astonishment, and still more confirmed in their belief that the chief actor in it was mad.

But the wits of Button's soon discovered that Swift was not mad, except in the poet's sense that only a thin partition divides genius from madness. His connection with Temple had made him known to some of the leading politicians of the day; and at this time he was in communication with Lords Somers, Sunderland, Halifax, and others, respecting the terms on which the Whig party might secure the support of his powerful pen. He tells us that he had frequent conversations with Lord Somers on the subject, and informed him that, having long been conversant with the Greek and Latin authors, and therefore a lover of liberty, he found himself much inclined towards the political principles of the Whigs; that only upon those principles did he think it possible to defend, or submit to, the Revolution of 1688; but that, as to religion, he was a High Churchman, nor could he conceive how any person wearing the clerical habit could be otherwise. He added that he had carefully observed with what insolence and haughtiness some lords of the Tory party treated not only their own chaplains but clergymen generally, and thought them sufficiently rewarded by loud professions of zeal to the Church; while the Whig nobility

acted in a directly contrary manner, treating individual clergymen with particular courtesy, but showing much contempt and ill-will towards the order in general. He knew, Swift continued, that it was necessary for their party to widen their base as much as possible by including the Protestants of all denominations. That he would not enter into the mutual reproaches made by violent men on either side; but he felt convinced that the connivance or encouragement given by the Whigs to those pamphleteers who attacked the whole body of the clergy, without any exceptions, would unite the Church as one man to oppose them; and he added, with his usual shrewdness, that he doubted whether his lordship's friends had fully considered the consequences of such action.

That Swift professed himself a High Churchman will surprise those of our readers who have not been accustomed to look upon him even as a Christian. But if they are men of impartial minds they will reject Professor Masson's explanation that, 'with a very questionable kind of belief in Christianity, he may have been a conscientious High Churchman, zealous for the social defence and aggrandisement of the ecclesiastical institution with which he was connected.' Whatever may have been the faults and failings of Swift, he was not wanting in honesty, and I cannot believe that he supported the Church merely as the prop and buttress of the system of social order. I think he acknowledged its other and higher claims on his allegiance. But on what grounds is it alleged that Swift was not a Christian? No doubt there is much profanity and more impurity in his writings, but nowhere do we find a denial of the fundamental truths of Christ's religion. Mr Thackeray, with what seems to us a singular contradictoriness, asserts that Swift was a sceptic, and yet that his was a reverent and a pious spirit: that he could love and he could pray. 'Through the storms and tempests of his furious mind the stars of religion and love break out

in the blue, shining serenely, though hidden by the driving clouds and the maddened hurricane of his life.' To me it seems that irreverence was the fatal temptation which entangled him constantly in its snare; and I believe it was his consciousness of this irreverent tendency that caused much of the agony of mind and soul from which he suffered. He saw and knew—could even admire—the very purity and beauty which his wayward intellect was constantly urging him to make a mock of. He was like one who, standing at the foot of the Cross, and acknowledging the greatness of the Sacrifice that was being consummated upon it, should nevertheless have been constrained by an evil spirit to spit at and revile the crucified Savour. What was that '*sæva indignatio*' which, in his own words, lacerated his heart, but a deep resentment, a fierce anger, not only at the weaknesses of humanity and the vanities of the world, but at his own sins? I venture to think, then, that after his fashion Swift was a Christian and a High Churchman, because he valued the ordinances of Christianity; and that his life, with all its long catalogue of errors, was not the organised hypocrisy which some of his biographers would make it.

The publication of *The Battle of the Books*, with its author's name attached to it, in 1703, made Swift conspicuously known in the literary society of London; curious fingers no longer pointed him out at Button's as 'the mad parson,' but he was treated with the utmost deference and respect. It, was however, his brilliant and masterly satire of the *Tale of a Tub* which first fully exhibited the power and copiousness and originality of his intellect. Though issued anonymously, its authorship did not long remain a secret. It secured for him at one bound the highest literary reputation, but it effectually precluded him from that promotion in the English Church which he so intensely desiderated. It is strange that such a man should have so coveted a mitre; it is not less strange

that he should not have seen how fatal an obstacle to the fulfilment of his wish he had interposed in his great satire. Contemporary writers denounced it as profane, but its note is irreverence rather than profanity ; an irreverence which is often very painful, and not the less painful because it might so easily have been avoided. It was written, undoubtedly, to serve the interests of the High Church party, and there can be no question that it accomplished its object ; for what, as Scott says, is so valuable to a party in Britain, whether in Church or State, as to gain the laughers to their side ? But the raillery was considered, and not without reason, to be too light for the seriousness of its purpose ; and the luxuriance of Swift's humour too often carries him over the borders of propriety. In his impatience to strip from the figures he puts on the stage every sham and pretence and affectation, he forgets that reserve which is both necessary and decent.

The plan of this remarkable work, which its admitted defects cannot prevent from being recognised always as one of the masterpieces of English literature, is as follows :—Three brothers, born at a birth, and no one of them knowing which was the eldest—Peter, Martin, and Jack—have for some time enjoyed each a special legacy from their father of a coat endowed with miraculous virtues,—namely, that of lasting, if properly worn, throughout the wearer's life, and that of expanding so as to adapt itself to the growth of the wearer's body. The will by which these coats were bequeathed contained strict directions for their use and preservation ; and the brothers, obeying them dutifully, preserved a true, unbroken friendship for the first seven years after their father's death [*i.e.*, for the first seven centuries of Primitive Christianity]—travelling together through several countries, encountering giants, and slaying dragons, but always keeping their coats in admirable condition. But, unfortunately, they

were at last beset by worldly temptations. Arriving in town, they fell in love with certain great ladies,—Duchess d'Argent [Money], Madame de Grandes Titres [Rank,] and the Countess d'Orgueil [Pride], and formed the acquaintance of a singular sect who regard the universe as only a large suit of clothes, and humanity as nothing but its external covering—what the world calls suits of clothes, being in reality the most refined species of animals. Hence this strange sect offered their homage to an idol which created men every day by a kind of manufacturing process; trimming up a gold chain, red gown, and white rod into a mayor; piling up furs and ermine into a judge; and transforming lawn and black satin into a bishop. We have here an anticipation of the philosophy taught by Herr Teufelsdrockh in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, passages in which bear a curiously close resemblance to this part of Swift's satire.

Under the influence of this new teaching, the three brothers grew dissatisfied with the simplicity of their vestments, and turned eagerly to their father's last will and testament, in the hope that it might be found to authorise some modification in the direction they wished. We generally discover what we have made up our mind to find; and by dint of much ingenious twisting of words and phrases, they fully satisfied themselves that they might venture on the adoption of shoulder-knots; by help of tradition, they contrived to deck their persons with gold lace; a supposed codicil was the excuse for lining their vestments with flame-coloured satin; and, by a free rendering of language, they obtained authority to embroider their coats all over with hideous figures. But as soon as they were embellished with their shoulder-knots, and strutting about as fine as lords in their fringes and satins, and 'the longest gold lace in the parish,' Peter displayed a superior turn for worldly advancement, and contrived to take the lead. Recommending himself to

the favour of a great nobleman [Constantine the Great], he secured comfortable quarters by the expulsion of this nobleman's family, and calmly telling Martin and Jack that he was the eldest son and heir, he forbade them to call him brother, and established himself in state as my Lord Peter. His brand-new pomp could not be maintained without money, and to obtain money he hit upon a variety of inventions. He turned out his wife and the wives of both Martin and Jack [that is, the Roman Church enforced celibacy], loaded his brothers with terrible curses if they hesitated to believe the monstrous lies he told them ; and practised so many knavish tricks, and showed so vast a pride, that his brothers resolved to leave him. Previously, they had joined with him in locking up their father's will [that is, in forbidding the laity to read the Bible]; but, having contrived to obtain a true copy [at the Reformation] which exposed all Peter's mendacity, they recalled their wives, and were in the act of telling a Newgate attorney, who had brought money for the pardon of a thief sentenced to be hanged next day, that the Sovereign alone could grant such pardon [a reference to Luther's preaching against Indulgences], when in burst Peter with a file of dragoons, and kicked them both out of doors. From that day he has ever refused to allow them under his roof.

After this, Martin and John took a lodging together, and resolved to reform their coats in faithful conformity with the stipulations of their father's will. They did not arrive at this resolution a moment too soon ! for scarcely a thread of the original vestments could be seen beneath the gold lace, and tags, and points, and ribbons, and embroidery that covered it. As to getting rid of these ornaments, however, the two brothers differed. Martin [the Church of England] began with furious zeal, but grew more moderate when he discovered that parts of the ornamental covering, especially the silver-tagged points, could not be removed without damage to the cloth ; and in the

end was content to leave untouched whatever could not be removed without injury to the texture of the stuff. But Jack [Presbytery] could not abide such compromises. In three minutes he accomplished as much havoc as Martin had done in as many hours: such, indeed, was his passion for plainness that he tore the main body of his coat from top to bottom (an allusion to the abolition of Episcopacy), so that he had to darn it with pack-thread and a skewer. Impatient of temper, and awkward by nature, he left some remnants of Peter's livery upon his own rents and patches; and hence, as it is in the nature of rags to present a mock resemblance to finery, not a few people failed to see the difference between Jack and Peter. 'The similitude between them frequently deceived the very disciples and followers of both.' The quarrel between the two is, however, deep and permanent, and Jack is unable to understand the moderation of temper displayed by his brother Martin. He would have him scold and rail as he does; and when he refuses, quarrels with him as he has quarrelled with Peter. The story ends with an ascription of the victory to Martin, who is credited with having made the closest approximation to the conditions of his father's will, if he has not actually fulfilled them.

After the publication of this great work, which for a more than Rabelaisian humour and profound intellectual perception, remains unequalled in our literature, Swift was silent for three or four years. In London society he occupied, however, a leading place; and he had formed an acquaintance with Addison which developed into a lasting friendship, honourable to both. In August 1705, Addison made him a present of his book of Travels, inscribing the fly-leaf with words which undoubtedly expressed a genuine feeling:—'To Dr Jonathan Swift, the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of his age.' The

greatest genius of his age resumed his pen in 1708, when he produced his *Letter on the Sacramental Test*, his *Sentiments of a Church of England Man with respect to Religion and Government*, and his *Argument against Abolishing Christianity.*

Of the last-named, the grave, savage irony is peculiarly *Swiftian*, as appears in the following passage :—

It is likewise proposed, as a great advantage to the public, that if we once discard the system of the gospel, all religion will of course be banished for ever ; and, consequently, along with it, those grievous prejudices of education which, under the names of *virtue*, *conscience*, *honour*, *justice*, and the like, are so apt to disturb the peace of human minds, and the notions whereof are so hard to be eradicated by right reason or free-thinking, sometimes during the whole course of our lives.

Here, first, I observe, how difficult it is to get rid of a phrase which the world is once grown fond of, though the occasion that first produced it be entirely taken away. For several years past, if a man had but an ill-favoured nose, the deep thinkers of the age would some way or other contrive to impute the cause to the prejudice of his education. From this fountain were said to be derived all our foolish notions of justice, piety, love of our country ; all our opinions of God or a future state, heaven, hell, and the like ; and there might formerly perhaps have been some pretence for this change. But so effectual care has been taken to remove these prejudices by an entire change in the methods of education, that (with honour I mention it to our polite innovators) the young gentlemen who are now on the scene seem to have not the least tincture of those infusions, or string of those weeds ; and, by consequence, the reason for abolishing nominal Christianity upon that pretext is wholly erased.

For the rest, it may perhaps admit a controversy whether the banishing of all notions of religion whatsoever would be convenient for the vulgar. Not that I am in the least of opinion with those who hold religion to have been the invention of politicians to keep the lower part of the world in awe, by the fear of invisible powers ; unless mankind was then very different to what it is now : for I look upon the mass or body of our people here in England, to be as free-thinkers, that is to say, as staunch unbelievers, as any of the highest rank. But I conceive some scattered notions about a Superior Power to be of singular use for the common people, as furnishing excellent materials to keep children quiet when they grow peevish, and providing topics of amusement in a tedious winter night.

The High Church tone of the *Letter* and *Sentiments* brought about a disruption of the alliance (never very cordial, I think) between Swift and the Whigs; his sincere belief in the value of Church of England principles prevailing over the political opinions he had imbibed from Sir William Temple. It has been observed, with much justice, that his object as 'a Church of England man' was one which has often been aimed at, but never accomplished—to moderate the violence of two contending parties, and lay down a neutral 'platform' on which both might meet under amicable conditions. He proposed to drop the terms of 'High' and 'Low Church,' in the belief that their only or primary use was to keep alive feelings of animosity and variance; not acknowledging that they really represented distinct schools of thought which might agree to toleration, but not to compromise. He desired to formulate, he says, 'a just, political, and religious creed, so far as related to a connection between Church and State, such as every honest subject of the Church of England must at once assent to.' Only from this creed Swift omitted theology,—of which, indeed, his knowledge was elementary; and he forgot also that there is such a thing in the world as *enthusiasm*, which, we may add, he was quite incapable of understanding.

The Whigs were by no means insensible to Swift's efficiency as a political force, and when they found he could no longer be retained as a champion, they sought, at all hazards, to prevent him from combating them as an enemy, and with this view meditated his appointment to some honourable situation abroad. It was proposed that he should have the secretaryship to the Vienna embassy. It was also proposed, on the principle, which has only of late gone out of vogue, that anybody does for a colonial bishopric, that he should be made Bishop of Virginia, with the general ecclesiastical supervision of the American Colonies. Happily both schemes fell to the ground,

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and Swift was left to the free exercise of his great powers. The Irish clergy, who pinned their faith to the formidable Vicar of Laracor, employed him to urge on the Government an extension to the Church in Ireland of the boon conceded some years before to the clergy of England; namely, the remission of the tax of 'tenths and first-fruits,' which the Crown had levied on the revenues of the Church since the days of Henry VIII. This remission, representing a sum of about sixteen thousand pounds per annum, the Whigs were unwilling to grant. The consequent negotiations, very dexterously conducted by Swift, kept him in England for upwards of twelve or thirteen months continuously, in the year 1708 and 1709.

It was at this period that his fertile invention conceived and carried out the celebrated Bickerstaff hoax. Among the astrological almanack-makers of the day, who flooded the town with their grotesque 'prophecies,' the most notorious was a certain John Partridge, editor of the yearly *Merlinus Liberatus*. He, with the rest of the infamous crew, had acquired a despotic influence over the vulgar of all classes; not alone 'in matters of weather or seasons of blood-letting and physicking, but in all kinds of knavish devices to swindle money out of the hopes or fears of besotted ignorance.' Assuming the name of Isaac Bickerstaff, which had caught his eye over a locksmith's shop, Swift proceeded to expose the combined ignorance and knavery of these impostors, and published his *Predictions for the year* 1708,[1] written in a strain of the most delightful gravity, and with a fine assumption of oracular confidence—in which, amongst numerous prognostications of the usual sort, he announced the death of John Part-

[1] The full title of the *jeu d'esprit* is as follows:—'Predictions for the Year 1708, Wherein the Month and the Day of the Month, are set down, the Persons named, and the Great Actions and Events of next Year Particularly Related, as they will come to pass. Written to prevent the People of England from being further imposed on by the vulgar Almanack-makers. By Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.'

ridge himself as destined to occur about 11 P.M. on the 29th of March, of 'a raging fever.' The 29th of March duly came; and on the following day appeared in the public prints 'A Letter to a Person of Honour,' from a person professing to be one of Partridge's acquaintances, recording the fulfilment, on the very night of the 29th, of Isaac Bickerstaff's prediction, with the trifling mistake as to time of about four hours. 'In other circumstances he was exact enough. But whether he had been the cause of this poor man's death, as well as the predictor, may be very reasonably disputed. However, it must be confessed the matter is odd enough, whether we should endeavour to account for it by chance, or the effect of imagination.'

As Swift had probably calculated, Partridge took the jest seriously, and in his Almanack for 1709 solemnly assured the people of England that Squire Bickerstaff was a fictitious name, assumed by some lying, impudent fellow, and that, blessed be God, John Partridge was still alive, and in good health, and all who reported otherwise were knaves. 'Mr Bickerstaff' immediately retorted with 'A Vindication,' in which he carried on the jest with humorous gravity, and accumulated detail upon detail to prove that Partridge was, or ought to be, dead as a red herring. 'I should not have given,' he says, in conclusion, 'the public or myself the trouble of this Vindication, if my name had not been made use of by several persons to whom I never lent it; one of which, a few days ago, was pleased to father on me a new set of predictions. But I think these are things too serious to be trifled with. It grieved me to the heart when I saw my labours, which had cost me so much thought and watching, bawled about by the common hawkers of Grub Street, which I only intended for the weighty consideration of the gravest persons. This prejudiced the world so much at first that several of my friends had the assurance to ask me whether

I was in jest? to which I only answered coldly that the event would show. But it is the talent of our age and nation to turn things of the greatest importance into ridicule. When the end of the year had verified all my predictions, out comes Mr Partridge's almanack, disputing the point of his death; so that I am employed like the general who was forced to kill his enemies twice over whom a necromancer had raised to life. If Mr Partridge have practised the same experiment upon himself, and be again alive, long may he continue so; that does not the least contradict my veracity; but I think I have clearly proved, by invincible demonstration, that he died at furthest within half-an-hour of the time I foretold, and not four hours sooner, as the above-mentioned author in his letter to a lord has maliciously suggested, with a design to blast my credit by charging me with so gross a mistake.'

This entertaining farce continued to be played for nearly two years,—Steele, Addison, Prior, Rowe, and Yalden joining in it—until the town was convulsed with inextinguishable laughter. The fun was heightened by two circumstances of unexpected seriousness: the Stationers' Company applied for an injunction against any almanack published under the name of John Partridge, as if the poor man were really dead; and the Lisbon Inquisition gravely condemned the predictions of the imaginary Bickerstaff to the flames.

From this colossal hoax resulted the establishment of the *Tatler*—the brilliant progenitor of a long line of periodical essayists which form not the least valuable or least fertile department of our literature. Swift, it appears, was in the secret of Steele's enterprise from the beginning, though Addison did not discover it until after the publication of the sixth number. By appropriating the popular name of Isaac Bickerstaff, the new venture recommended itself at once to the public acceptance. Swift contributed

several papers, and continued his interest in the undertaking until his friendship with Steele was relaxed by political differences. These slight essays, with an elegy on Partridge's supposed death, and the really beautiful verses on 'Baucis and Philemon,' represent the whole of Swift's literary work at this period.

During the latter months of 1709 and the earlier ones of 1710, Swift was at Laracor, waiting for that preferment which he was led to anticipate as the natural fruit of his connection with the great Whig leaders. It did not come; and in a mood of exceeding moroseness he crossed over to London, resolved to demand a fulfilment of their promises, or prepared finally to break with them. He arrived on the 9th of September, and immediately plunged into that stress and strain of public affairs which, in his *Journal to Stella*, he has described with such graphic force and such minuteness of detail. This remarkable Diary was ostensibly addressed to Mrs Dingley as well as to Miss Johnson, but for the latter were reserved all its confidences and tendernesses. 'It is a wonderful medley,' as Scott remarks, 'in which grave reflections and important facts are at random intermingled with trivial occurrences and the puerile jargon of the most intimate tenderness. From Stella nothing is to be either concealed or disguised; and as the journal is written during the hurry of every day's occurrences, it rather resembles the author's thoughts expressed aloud, as they passed through his mind, than a connected register of his opinions. What it wants, however, in system and gravity, it gains in authenticity and interest, for the readiness with which the author's pen expresses, in the "little language," every whim which crossed his brain, vouches for his ample and unreserved confidence.' Whoever studies it carefully will, I am persuaded, rise from it with a conviction that Swift was by no means the monster he has been painted; that there was a fund of deep and intense feeling in that tortured heart,

and a capacity for noble and generous ideas in that busy, powerful brain.

. . . . . .

From the Whig statesmen, who seem never to have fully trusted or rightly understood their ally, he met with a cold reception; and vowing vengeance against Somers and Halifax, whom he accused of having neglected and betrayed him, he publicly transferred his services to the new Tory Government of Harley and Bolingbroke. By these ministers—the first among English public men rightly to appreciate the influence of the Press in political warfare—his support was gladly welcomed. They received him not as a hireling or a dependant, but as a friend and an equal. 'I stand,' he writes to Stella, on the 10th of October, 'I stand with the new people ten times better than ever I did with the old, and forty times more caressed.' Undertaking the charge of the Tory organ, the *Examiner*, he bestowed upon it, between November 10, 1710, and June 14, 1711, some of his best work. With indefatigable vigour he rallied and encouraged his friends, encountered and discomfited his adversaries, and fought in the forefront of the great political battle with an ingenuity that seemed inexhaustible, and an energy that showed no signs of failing. More than this: with extraordinary versatility and readiness, his pungent pen poured forth epigram and squib and lampoon, satirical verses of all kinds, and political pamphlets in profusion—always written with wonderful clearness, if not with grace or eloquence. No man knew better than Swift how to write in a style understanded of the common people. No man was ever more successful in conveying his meaning in language that was incapable of misinterpretation.

It is not too much to say that the existence of the Harley Administration was prolonged in a great measure through the support given to it by Swift's unresting pen. The value of this support was not unacknowledged by the

Lord Treasurer, who admitted him to his most intimate confidence, and consulted him in the most critical emergencies. Pecuniary remuneration Swift refused; a chaplaincy which Harley pressed upon him he also rejected. Partly, perhaps, because he played for a higher prize; and partly because he loved to exhibit his independence, and desired to retain the freedom to censure ministers for their mistakes, and to rail at them when they offended him. His assistance was so precious—his influence so extensive—that they could deny him nothing which he asked, except when he asked for himself. A mitre they could not give, because the Queen on this point was inflexibly resolute; and anything less than a mitre he would not accept. But it was through his powerful intercession that his Whig literary friends, Addison and Steele, Congreve and Rowe, retained their offices, notwithstanding the change of administration. He was prone to the exhibition of his influence, and sometimes in an injudicious manner. On one occasion he sent Harley into the House of Commons to call out the first Secretary of State, though his sole business with the latter was to inform him that he could not dine with him if he dined late. On another, with a much more pardonable pride, he insisted that a duke should pay him a first visit, merely because he was a duke. He took no pains to conceal his contempt or dislike for rank and the conventionalities of society; though this dislike or contempt proceeded, I think, from personal considerations, and not from political principles.

The abrupt and even discourteous manner in which he behaved towards the Queen's ministers is illustrated by several well-known passages in his journal, and especially in one under date of April 3d, 1711:—

'I called,' he says, 'at Mr Secretary's to see what . . . . ailed him on Sunday. I made him a very proper speech, and told him I observed he was much out of temper; that I did not expect him to tell me the cause, but would be glad to see he was in better; and one

thing I warned him of, never to appear cold to me, for I would not be treated like a school-boy ; that I had felt too much of that in my life already ; that I expected every great minister who honoured me with his acquaintance, if he heard or saw anything to my disadvantage, would let me know in plain words, and not put me in pain to guess by the change or coldness of his countenance or behaviour, for it was what I would hardly bear from a crowned head ; and I thought no subject's favour was worth it ; and that I designed to let my lord keeper and Mr Harley know the same thing, that they might use me accordingly. He took all right ; said I had reason ; vowed nothing ailed him, but sitting up whole nights at business, and one night at drinking ; would have had me dine with him and Mrs Masham's brother, to make up matters ; but I would not : I don't know, but I would not.'

Let us follow Swift to St James's, and observe him holding a kind of levée. like a successful minister. The time is 1713, and our authority, Bishop Kennet :—

'When I came to the ante-chamber,' he says, 'to wait before prayers, Dr Swift was the principal man of talk and business, and acted as a master of requests. He was soliciting the Earl of Arran to speak to his brother, the Duke of Ormond, to get a chaplain's place established in the garrison of Hull for Mr Fiddes, a clergyman in that neighbourhood, who had lately been in jail, and published sermons to pay fees. He was promising Mr Thorold to undertake with my Lord Treasurer that, according to his petition, he should obtain a salary of two hundred pounds per annum, as minister of the English Church at Rotterdam. He stopped F. Gwynne, Esquire, going in with the red bag to the Queen, and told him aloud he had something to say to him from my Lord Treasurer. He talked with the son of Dr Davenant to be sent abroad, and took out his pocket-book, and wrote down several things, as memoranda, to do for him. He turned to the fire, and took out his gold watch, and telling him the time of the day, complained it was very late. A gentleman said, "He was too fast." "How can I help it," says the doctor, "if the courtiers give me a watch that won't go right?" Then he instructed a young nobleman that the best poet in England was Mr Pope (a Papist), who had begun a translation of Homer into English verse, for which "he must have them all subscribe, for," says he, "the author *shall not* begin to print till I have a thousand guineas for him." Lord Treasurer, after leaving the Queen, came through the room, beckoning Dr Swift to follow him : both went off just before prayers.'

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It may be doubted whether any man has ever wielded in England so vast an influence, political and social, as Swift at this time enjoyed. The truth is, he towered above his contemporaries, like Saul, the son of Kish, head and shoulders. In the keenness of his satire, the force of his invective, the copiousness of his wit, he was unequalled. But he was great not only as a pamphleteer and a versifier; he was the first 'talker' of his time. It was almost impossible to resist the unexampled charm of his conversation, which was remarkable for its variety, its piquancy, its peculiar and original treatment of ordinary themes. In his address there was a fascination of which even his enemies were sensible, and his personal appearance was calculated to draw attention and gratify the eye. He was about five feet eight inches and a half in height; full but not corpulent in figure, with regular and commanding features; a high, broad forehead, heavy-lidded blue eyes, which under bushy black eyebrows could glow with anger or melt with softness; a slightly aquiline nose; a firm mouth with closed lips; and a dimpled double chin. His ascendancy over women was remarkable: the ladies of the Berkeley and Ormond families, Mrs Finch, Lady Worsley, Lady Stanley, Lady Lucy Stanhope, Miss Barton, Mrs Long, and all the fair wits and intelligent gentlewomen of the period, burned incense on his shrine. 'When I lived in England,' he told Bishop Horsley's daughter at a later time, 'once every year I issued out an edict, commanding that all ladies of wit, sense, merit, and quality, who had an ambition to be acquainted with me, should make the first advances at their peril.' It is known that they willingly obeyed the edict, and delighted to be the recipients of his humorous, kindly, or semi-satirical speeches. In this connection it is only fair to say that with none of these beautiful devotees was Swift's name aspersed by scandalous rumours. He moved amongst them cold and unimpressionable. 'If we consider his

behaviour,' says Lord Orrery, 'so far only as it relates to women, we shall find that he looked upon them rather as busts than as whole figures.'

During his residence in London, Swift formed an acquaintance in which originated the most melancholy passage in his melancholy career. He was in the habit of dining frequently at the house of a Mrs Vanhomrigh, a widowed lady of property, whose daughter, Hester, was then about seventeen years old. Lord Orrery says she was not handsome, but lively and graceful and fond of books. She soon learned to look up to the influential Dr Swift, the friend of Harley and Bolingbroke, and the greatest satirist of the age, with boundless admiration; he, on the other hand, was pleased with the silent flattery of her eyes, and attracted by her personal accomplishments. The relation which he assumed towards her was that which he had assumed towards Stella in the early days of their intimacy,—the relation of teacher to pupil. Firmly believing in the intellectual gifts of women, he delighted to watch and assist the development of a young, vigorous, and healthy nature. In his poem of 'Cadenus and Vanessa'—Cadenus representing himself, and Vanessa Miss Vanhomrigh—the one poem in which he attains the standard of true poetry—he says:—

> 'His conduct might have made him styled
> A father, and the nymph his child,
> That innocent delight he took
> To see the virgin mind her book,
> Was but the master's secret joy
> In school to hear the finest boy.
> Her knowledge with her fancy grew;
> She hourly pressed for something new;
> Ideas came into her mind
> So fresh, his lessons lagged behind.'

But when teacher and pupil are of opposite sexes, the relationship sometimes assumes a warmer colouring:—

'Vanessa, not in years a score,
Dreams of a gown of forty-four;
Imaginary charms can find
In eyes with reading almost blind;
Declined in health, advanced in years,
She fancies music in his tongue;
No farther looks, but thinks him young.
What mariner is not afraid
To venture in a ship decayed?
What planter will attempt to yoke
A sapling with a falling oak?
As years increase, she brighter shines,
Cadenus with each day declines;
And he must fall a prey to time,
While she continues in her prime.'

That Vanessa had learned to love him seems never to have been suspected by her accomplished tutor; and when, with the natural warmth and openness of her temper, she exposed her feelings, we cannot doubt that, as Scott says, he actually felt the shame, disappointment, guilt, and surprise to which he gives expression in his poem; but instead of honestly acknowledging his engagement to Stella—perhaps he felt that he had delayed this acknowledgment too long, and that it could not then be made without exposing himself to a just accusation of unfairness and deception—he endeavoured to check her passionate avowals by coldly pointing out the difference between them in years and fortune, by dwelling upon his ambitious projects, and by enlarging on the reproach which the world would throw upon so ill-assorted a union. Love is insensible to such cool logic, and Vanessa—

'Brought weighty arguments to prove
That reason was her guide in love. . . .
If one short volume could comprise
All that was witty, learned, and wise,
How would it be esteemed and read,
Although the writer long were dead!
If such an author were alive,
How all would for his friendship strive,

And come in crowds to see his face !
And this she takes to be her case.
Cadenus answers every end,
The book, the author, and the friend ;
The utmost her desires will reach
Is but to learn what he can teach ;
His converse is a system fit
Alone to fill up all her wit ;
While every passion of her mind
In him is centred and confined.'

While Swift thus adopted an unfair reticence towards Hester Vanhomrigh, he was guilty of the same cruel injustice towards Hester Johnson. Some time elapsed before he mentioned the Vanhomrighs in the daily records of his Journal ; and when at last he noted some of his visits to their house, it was in guarded language and with an evident reluctance which gradually awakened Stella's suspicions. In the fourth letter of that famous collection, he describes his lodging in Bury Street, St James's, where he rents a dining-room and bedchamber on the first floor at eight shillings a week ; in the sixth he slightly notices his having made the acquaintance of 'a lady just come to town,' who resides in the same street, but he omits her name. In Letter VIII. he exclaims :—'What do you mean "that boards near me, that I dine with now and then"? . . . You know whom I have dined with every day since I left you, better than I do.' This evasion seems to effect a temporary lull in Stella's suspicions, but in a later letter the doctor has to own that he has 'dined gravely' with a Mrs Vanhomrigh ; next, that he has visited 'his neighbour ;' and, again, that he has been unwell, and means to dine for a whole week with his neighbour ! Stella's heart was a true prophet : mischief and sorrow were to spring from this intimacy with 'the Vans.'

Meanwhile, he was waiting with an impatience he could not and would not conceal, for the promised reward of his

great services. The see of Hereford fell vacant in 1712, but, in Scott's pithy phrase, 'there was a lion in the path.' Queen Anne, privately advised and encouraged by the Archbishop of York as well as by the Duchess of Somerset, whose anger Swift had incurred by grotesque allusions to her red hair—and what woman ever forgave the *spretæ injuria formæ?*—strenuously refused to bestow a mitre on the author of *The Tale of a Tub.* We honour Queen Anne for her honest adherence to her duty. That Swift should be fairly rewarded for his services was just and proper; that the reward should be high ecclesiastical preferment can hardly be maintained. The curious conception of the episcopal office entertained both by Swift and the Ministers is shown in the mere fact that neither of them perceived his absolute incompetency for it.

Failing even to secure an English deanery for their friend, Harley and Bolingbroke at length persuaded him to accept the only appointment in their power, the deanery of St Patrick's, in his native city of Dublin, a vacancy being purposely created by the removal of Dean Sterne to the Bishopric of Dromore. The warrant was signed on the 23d of February 1713; and early in June he crossed the Channel to take possession of his decanal stall, which, though it provided him with an ample income, he never ceased to regard with the bitterest disappointment. 'At my first coming,' he wrote to Vanessa, 'I thought I should have died with discontent, and was horribly melancholy while they were installing me; but it begins to wear off, and change to dulness.' He was well pleased when the Tory Government pressed him to return to England to compose the differences which had sprung up between Harley and St John, and threatened the ruin of their party. His mediatorial offices effected a temporary reconciliation. To re-establish the sinking fortunes of his friends, he published his *Public Spirit of the Whigs*,[1] in

[1] For this he received one hundred pounds from Harley.

which he hurled such savage insults at the Scotch nobles, that they procured the issue of a proclamation for the detection of the author. It was well known to have proceeded from Swift's merciless pen ; but as the publisher and printer staunchly guarded the secret, no legal evidence was forthcoming, and Harley employed all the resources of the Government to baffle the designs of the prosecution.

His influence had been so strengthened and extended that Swift once more indulged hopes of a seat on the Episcopal bench of England. While still involved in vast political labours—for his position was almost that of a Minister without a portfolio—and busily engaged in composing pamphlets and pasquinades, he found time for literary amusements, and joined with Harley and St John, Congreve, Arbuthnot, Atterbury, Gay, and Pope in establishing the celebrated Scriblerus Club, the avowed object of which was to satirise the abuse of human learning. Its existence was very brief ; but we owe to it Pope's *Treatise of the Bathos ; or, the Art of Sinking in Poetry*, the *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus*, to which it is probable all the members contributed, though it was mainly written by Dr Arbuthnot, and Swift's immortal satire of *Gulliver's Travels*. The renewal of the quarrel between Harley and Bolingbroke led to the dissolution of this brilliant literary fellowship. After a vain attempt to close the breach, Swift suddenly withdrew from the vexations of political turmoil, and for some weeks lived in retirement in a sequestered Berkshire village. 'I am at a clergyman's house,'[1] he writes to Vanessa on the 8th of June 1714, 'an old friend and acquaintance whom I love very well ; but he is such a melancholy, thoughtful man, partly from nature, and partly by a solitary life, that I shall soon catch the spleen from him. Out of ease and complaisance, I desire him not to alter any of his methods for me ;

[1] That of his friend Mr Gracy, at Letcomb.

so we dine exactly between twelve and one; at night we have bread and butter and a glass of ale, and at ten he goes to bed. Wine is a stranger, except a little I sent him, of which, one evening in two, we have a pint between us. His wife has been this month thirty miles off, at her father's, and will not return these days. I never saw her, and perhaps the house will be worse when she comes. I read all day, or walk, and do not speak as many words as I have now writ, in these days; so that, in short, I have a mind to steal to Ireland, unless I feel myself take more to this way of living, so different, in every circumstance, from what I left.'

The death of Queen Anne accomplished a complete political revolution. The Tories were scattered to the four winds, and the Whigs came into power under the leadership of Sir Robert Walpole. Swift's expectations and ambitions were crushed into the dust; and with rage at his heart he returned to his Irish deanery, to spend many dreary years in what he calls 'a most obscure, disagreeable country, and among a most profligate and abandoned people.' Pursued by libels and threats of arrest and imprisonment, insulted by the populace in the streets, he maintained a calm and courageous attitude, and openly avowed his sympathy with Harley, in that statesman's hour of defeat and disaster. 'Dean Swift,' says Arbuthnot, 'keeps up his noble spirit; and, though like a man knocked down, you may behold him still with a stern countenance, and aiming a blow at his adversaries.'

For the next seven years, 1715 to 1721, he led a retired life, arranging his domestic affairs, and faithfully discharging his ecclesiastical functions. Writing to Pope, in January 1721, he says:—'A few weeks after the loss of that excellent Princess I came to my station here, where I have continued ever since in the greatest privacy and utter ignorance of those events which are most commonly talked of in the world. I neither know the names

nor the number of the family which now reigneth, further than the Prayer-Book informeth me. I cannot tell who is Chancellor, who are secretaries, nor with what nations we are at peace or war. And this manner of life was not taken up out of any sort of affectation, but merely to avoid giving offence, and for fear of provoking party zeal.' To Gay he writes :—'I would describe to you my way of living, if any method could be called so in this country. I choose my companions among those of least consequence and most compliance. I read the most trifling books I can find, and when I write it is upon the most trifling subjects; but riding, sleeping, walking, take up eighteen out of the twenty-four hours. I procrastinate more than I did twenty years ago, and have several things to finish which I put off to twenty years hence.' How the Dean boarded in a private family in Dublin, conditioning for leave to invite his friends to dinner at so much per head, and having only two evening receptions a week at the Deanery; how he brought Stella and Mrs Dingley from Laracor and settled them in lodgings on the other side of the Liffey, keeping up the same precautions in his intercourse with them as before, but devolving the management of his receptions at the Deanery upon Stella, who acted as virtual mistress of the house; how he had his own way in all cathedral business, and had always a few clergymen and others in his train, who toadied him, and took part in the facetious horse-play to which he was partial; how gradually his strongly-marked countenance became known to every citizen, and his eccentricities familiar to them, until 'the Dean' grew to be the lion of Dublin, and all the people turned to look at him as he walked in the streets; how, among his other oddities, he was charged with stinginess in his entertainments, and a sharp look-out after the wine; how sometimes he would fly off from town, and take refuge in the country seat of a friendly Irish nobleman; how all this while he was reading books

of every kind, writing notes and jottings, and corresponding with Pope, Gay, Prior, Arbuthnot, Oxford, Bolingbroke, and other literary and political friends in London or abroad—are matters in the recollection of all who have read any of the numerous biographies of this remarkable man.

I have carried my narrative far beyond the death of Anne; but, in order to complete my view of Swift's character, it will be necessary to extend it to the close of his career. Let us pass on to the last scenes in the romantic drama of his acquaintance with Vanessa. That impulsive admirer of the great Dean broke through the bonds of maidenly reserve, and followed him to his Irish retreat. Her mother had bequeathed to her a small Irish estate. Marley Abbey, near Celbridge, and thither she made her way, on Swift's retirement from the political stage, accompanied by her sister. From this point of vantage she renewed her attacks upon the Dean, and sought to compel him, by alternate entreaties and arguments, to accept the proffer of her hand. He was willing to concede a devoted friendship; but Vanessa would be satisfied with nothing less than a husband's love and confidence. That at this juncture Swift was intensely wretched, I have no doubt. He was not a man insensible to the appeals of conscience; and he must have been fully aware that the embarrassments of his position were due to his deviation from the path of manly rectitude. He had encouraged Vanessa's hopes—or at least had refrained from checking them—while knowing that, as a man of honour, he could never gratify them. The truth would seem to be that, during his absence from Stella, her vivacity and accomplishments, not to say her devotion to himself, had fascinated him into a forgetfulness of Hester Johnson's supreme claims. Stella, as Scott puts it, had resigned her country, her friends, and even hazarded her character, in the expectation of one day being united to Swift. But if she had

accomplished the greater sacrifice, Vanessa was the more important victim. 'She had youth, fortune, fashion; all the acquired accomplishments and information in which Stella was deficient; possessed at least as much wit, and certainly higher powers of imagination. She had, besides, enjoyed the advantage of having, in a manner, compelled Swift to hear and reply to the language of passion.'

However this may be, Swift had no sooner returned to Ireland than Stella's influence over him was re-established; and though not unwilling to remain on friendly terms with Miss Vanhomrigh, he did his best to avoid any closer intimacy. That he repelled her advances with deliberate coldness is apparent from the language in which she reproaches him:—'If you continue to treat me as you do,' she says, 'you will not be made uneasy by me long. It is impossible to describe what I have suffered since I saw you last. I am sure I could have borne the rack much better than those killing, killing words of yours. Sometimes I have resolved to die without seeing you more; but those resolves, to your misfortune, did not last long. For there is something in human nature that prompts one so to find relief in this world, I must give way to it, and beg you would see me, and speak kindly to me; for I am sure you'd not condemn anyone to suffer what I have done, could you but know it. The reason I write to you is, because I cannot tell it to you should I see you. For when I begin to complain, then you are angry; and there is something in your looks so awful, that it strikes me dumb. Oh! that you may have but so much regard for me left, that this complaint may touch your soul with pity! I say as little as ever I can; did you but know what I thought, I am sure it would move you to forgive me, and believe, I cannot help telling you this, and live.'

Meantime, the health of his constant and affectionate Stella was rapidly declining. She was profoundly sensible of the unhappy position she occupied in the eyes of

society; she knew that she had sacrificed her youth, her hopes, her prospects to Swift; and now she suspected him of having entangled himself with a rival. Deeply affected by her sufferings, he employed his old and tried friend, Dr Ashe, Bishop of Clogher, to ascertain the cause; he might, one would suppose, have readily comprehended it. To convince her of his fidelity, and to avert from her the stings and arrows of calumny, there was but one way. Swift replied, it is said, that he had formed two resolutions with regard to matrimony. One, that he would not marry until he possessed a competent fortune; the other, that he would not marry at a time of life which should allow him no reasonable hope of seeing his children settled in the world. He may, perhaps, have laid down these rules; but assuredly some other and stronger motive was behind them. They are sufficient neither to explain nor justify his conduct. At length, moved by Stella's distress, he consented to go through the form of marriage with her; and the ceremony took place, some time in the year 1716, in the deanery garden, the Bishop of Clogher officiating.[1]

I am sometimes tempted to think that Swift might have been happy if he would. A frank explanation with Vanessa would have dissipated much of his anxiety; and in the companionship of the devoted woman whom he had known, esteemed, and loved for many years, that fierce heart of his and that restless brain might have been soothed into a healthful tranquillity. He was only forty-nine years of age, and Stella only thirty-two; both might have reasonably looked forward to a long period of domestic repose, if he would but have set aside the stringent conditions imposed by his own will. Why he did not, remains the great mystery of his career. Whence arose

[1] It cannot be said that Swift's marriage is well authenticated. The common statement is, that the Bishop of Clogher revealed the fact to Bishop Berkeley, and that Stella, shortly before her death, made it known to Dr Sheridan. But none of Swift's most intimate friends were ever acquainted with it.

his strange dread and antipathy to the married life? whence his hatred to children? whence his savage contempt for humanity, his cynical dislike of his fellow-men? His career was to some extent a failure, but not such a failure as to explain his fierce wrath, his moods of passion and bitterness. If he had not won the episcopal crozier, if he were relegated to an Irish deanery, he had attained, at all events, a large measure of fame and influence. What, then, was the secret of his waywardness, his unhappiness—of his refusal of the happiness that lay within his reach? Was it some physical disability, or was it his knowledge that he had inherited the dread affliction of mental disease? Well, I think that no impartial biographer can contend that he was at any time a sane man. His irritability of temper, his fits of giddiness and vertigo, his accesses of silent rage, his love of filth and lewdness—these were all indications of cerebral disorder. Nor was he ignorant of the curse imposed upon him. During the visit to Dublin of Dr Young, the author of *The Night Thoughts*, we are told that one day Swift, while walking with him, made a sudden pause. 'We passed on,' says Young, 'but perceiving he did not follow me, I went back and found him fixed as a statue, and earnestly gazing upward at a noble elm, which, in its uppermost branches, was much withered and decayed. Pointing at it, he said, "I shall be like that tree; I shall die at the top."' We are also told that when the Dean, in conversation, dwelt upon the clouds of mental imbecility which had darkened the old age of Somers, Marlborough, and other illustrious contemporaries, a sad foreboding of a similar fate formed a perceptible undercurrent in his remarks. It may be traced in his answer to a friend who spoke of some one as a fine old gentleman. 'What!' exclaimed the Dean; 'have you yet to learn that there is no such thing as a fine old gentleman? If the man you speak of had either a mind or a body

worth a farthing, they would have worn him out long ago.'

It was not until 1720 that Swift visited Vanessa at Marley Abbey. His visits in that year were frequent, and a correspondent supplied Sir Walter Scott with some interesting particulars respecting them.

'Marley Abbey, near Celbridge, where Miss Vanhomrigh resided, is built much in the form of a real cloister, especially in its external appearance. An aged man (upwards of ninety by his own account) showed the grounds (says Scott) to my correspondent. He was the son of Mrs Vanhomrigh's gardener, and used to work with his father in the garden when a boy. He remembered the unfortunate Vanessa well, and his account of her corresponded with the usual description of her person, especially as to her *embonpoint*. He said she went seldom abroad, and saw little company; her constant amusement was reading, or walking in the garden. Yet, according to this authority, her society was courted by several families in the neighbourhood, who visited her, notwithstanding her seldom returning that attention; and he added, that her manners interested every one who knew her. But she avoided company, and was always melancholy, save when Swift was there, and then she seemed happy. The garden was to an uncommon degree crowded with laurels. The old man said that when Miss Vanhomrigh expected the Dean, she always planted with her own hand a laurel or two against his arrival. He showed her favourite seat, still called Vanessa's Bower; there a few trees and some laurels indicate the spot. They had formerly, according to the old man's information, been trained into a close arbour. There were two seats and a rude table within the bower, the opening of which commanded a view of the Liffey, which had a romantic effect; and there was a small cascade that murmured at some distance. In this sequestered spot, according to the gardener's account, the

Dean and Vanessa used often to sit, with books and writing materials on the table before them.'

The death of her younger sister imposed upon Swift the necessity of restricting his intercourse with Vanessa, whom in her solitude he could no longer visit without suspicion. At the same time, her loneliness and her sorrow seemed to increase the force of her attachment to Swift, and she resolved on a decisive step which should either confirm or dispel her fears. Into the exact nature of his mysteriously vague connection with Miss Johnson she had hitherto forborne to inquire; but she believed it to be the chief obstacle to the realisation of her hopes, and determined at length to know its true character. She wrote to Miss Johnson, and requested from her the information that was of such vital importance. In reply, Stella, it is alleged, made known her marriage to the Dean; and afterwards, indignant that he should have placed himself in a position which authorised Miss Vanhomrigh to make such an inquiry, she forwarded to him her rival's unfortunate letter, and withdrew to the house of a Mr Ford, near Dublin. In a paroxysm of passion, Swift mounted his horse, and rode immediately to Marley Abbey. Entering the room where Vanessa was seated, and wearing on his countenance a gloomy severity which awed her into trembling silence, he flung her letter on the table, and, without uttering a word, stalked from the house and galloped back to Dublin. The letter, says Scott, was Vanessa's death-warrant. Within a few weeks she died of what the world calls a broken heart; rather, I would say, a victim to her own ill-regulated passions—to a wild, unmeasured attachment which she had allowed to overcome her reason and her judgment. 'Vanessa,' says Lord Orrery, 'was remarkably vain. The character given of her by Cadenus is fine painting, but in general fictitious. She was fond of dress; impatient to be admired; very romantic in her

turn of mind; superior, in her own opinion, to all her sex; full of pertness, gaiety, and pride; not without some agreeable accomplishments, but far from being either beautiful or genteel.'

Swift, it is said, when informed of Miss Vanhomrigh's death, retired, overcome with self-reproach and remorse, into the south of Ireland, and spent two months in complete seclusion. On his return to Dublin, Stella was easily induced to forgive him; 'judging, probably, that the anguish he had sustained was a sufficient expiation for an offence which was now irremediable.' It was, however, Vanessa who had the most to forgive. As for Stella, her hold upon Swift's affections seems never to have been seriously weakened. The birthday poems which he composed every year in her honour bear witness to this: one may criticise their prosaic character, but one cannot doubt their sincerity. Thus, in 1718 he writes:—

'Stella this day is thirty-four
(We sha'n't dispute a year or more):
However, Stella, be not troubled,
Although thy size and years are doubled
Since first I saw thee at sixteen,
The brightest virgin on the green:
So little is thy form declined,
Made up so largely in thy mind.'

Again, in 1720:—

'See at her levee crowding swains,
Whom Stella freely entertains
With breeding, humour, wit, and sense,
And puts them but to small expense;
Their mind so plentifully fills,
And makes such reasonable bills,
So little gets for what she gives,
We really wonder how she lives!
And, had her stock been less, no doubt
She must have long ago run out.'

For six years Swift's genius had been almost entirely

inactive: his time had been spent in the regular discharge of his ecclesiastical duties; in an elaborate course of study; in constant correspondence with the London wits, and in pleasant intercourse with Sheridan, Dr Delaney, and other literary friends who joined the social circle of the Deanery. In 1720 he re-appeared on the public stage—not in his old character, as the apologist and defender of a Ministry, but in the nobler part of the advocate of an oppressed nationality. Conceiving that Parliament had imposed unjust restrictions upon Irish commerce, he wrote, at a fever heat of indignation, in 1720, his *Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufactures*, recommending a system of non-importation in opposition to the monopoly enjoyed by the English manufacturers. As a political economist Swift was hopelessly feeble; but, no doubt, his 'Proposal' sprang from the indignation of a patriotic spirit. It provoked the anger of the Irish Executive: the printer was arrested and brought to trial for publishing a seditious, factious, and virulent libel; but the Government failed to obtain a conviction, and their action had no other effect than greatly to increase the Dean's popularity and power.

He next denounced the project of a National Bank; interfered to check the increase of street robbery; and brought all his energies to bear on the moot question of a new copper coinage. The copper currency of Ireland was both debased and deficient; and through the influence of George I.'s favourite, the Duchess of Kendal, one William Wood, in 1723, obtained, under certain conditions, the patent right of coining halfpence and farthings to the extent of one hundred and eighty thousand pounds for circulation in Ireland. There was nothing unjust or unwise in this concession: it is now admitted that it would have been of great advantage to the country; but it was made in an impolitic manner. The patent was passed without the knowledge or con-

currence of the Lord-Lieutenant or Irish Privy Council, an insult, it was considered, to the dignity and independence of the kingdom. This was the fundamental principle of Swift's opposition; though, for obvious reasons, he was compelled to mask it under specific objections to Wood's scheme, rather than initiate a dangerous discussion upon a political question of the most delicate character. Adopting the *nom de plume* of M. B. Drapier, a supposititious Irish trader, he published a series of *Letters*, and succeeded in arousing a storm of national indignation which forced the Government into cancelling the contract. He did more; his trenchant exposure of the illegalities practised towards Ireland by the British Ministry called forth a sentiment of nationality, the ultimate effects of which he little anticipated. In his fourth letter, venturing upon dangerous ground which he had hitherto avoided, he openly advocated the independence of Ireland, though it was not of the native Irish and their rights that he was thinking, but of the descendants of the English settlers, who had become, by the way, *plus Hiberniores quam Hibernis*. 'I have digressed a little,' he says, 'in order to refresh that spirit so seasonably raised among you, and to let you see that, by the laws of God, of nature, of nations, and of your country, you are and ought to be as free a people as your brethren in England.'

The Government then raised its arm to strike. A proclamation was published offering a reward of three hundred pounds for the discovery of the author of the fourth Drapier's Letter, which was characterised as 'a wicked and malicious pamphlet, containing several seditious and scandalous passages, highly reflecting upon his Majesty and his Ministers, and tending to alienate the affections of his good subjects in England and Ireland from each other.' The authorship was, of course, 'an open secret,' but no one could be found to furnish the evidence necessary for identification. The Government

then imprisoned Harding, the printer, and ordered a bill of indictment to be prepared against him. Swift wrote a short paper, called *Seasonable Advice to the Grand Jury*, copies of which were distributed to every member of the jury before the bill, and had so great an effect that they unanimously threw it out. Three more *Letters* followed, and eventually the Ministry yielded. Then, indeed, the popular exultation swept from north to south in unchecked flow. Swift was hailed as the saviour of the country he had always rejected and disowned. His picture was set up in every street, and convivial spirits exhorted one another to—

> 'Fill bumpers to the Drapier,
> Whose convincing paper
> Set us, gloriously,
> From brazen fetters free.'

Early in 1726 Swift visited England, after an absence of twelve years, and was enthusiastically welcomed by Pope, Gay, Arbuthnot, and other of his old associates. He met with a favourable reception from both the Prince and Princess of Wales. During his stay in England he passed his time between Twickenham and Dawly, with his friends Pope and Bolingbroke. Pope then published his volume of *Miscellanies*, consisting of contributions by Arbuthnot and himself, but principally by Swift. The sale was very large, but the entire profits, amounting to one hundred and fifty pounds, went to Pope. In August, Swift, whose increasing giddiness and deafness unfitted him for society, returned to Ireland; and in the following November appeared, under the shield of anonymity, his masterpiece, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World; by Lemuel Gulliver, first a Surgeon, and then a Captain of several Ships*, a book which has had, like *Robinson Crusoe*, the extraordinary fortune to charm both old and young—the young by the novel interest of its adventures, the old

by the incisive force of its satire. The first suggestion of it may have come, as critics say, from Lucian, and it may owe some touches to Cyrano de Bergerac and Rabelais; but as a whole it is intensely original and individual—the author's mint-mark is on every page—no one but Swift could have conceived and executed it. Though in many of its details its fierce irony applies to a past age and past manners, its general scope is so wide and its application so universal that its popularity has never diminished; 'children thumb it, boys read it, men understand it, and old folk commend it.' Perhaps no work, not excepting Defoe's and Bunyan's immortal romances, ever presented such attractions to all classes. 'It offered personal and political satire to the readers in high life, low and coarse incident to the vulgar, marvels to the romantic, wit to the young and lively, lessons of morality and policy to the grave, and maxims of deep and bitter misanthropy to neglected age and disappointed ambition.'

There are four parts, and in each the plan of satire is different. In the first the Voyage to Lilliput is obviously a burlesque on the Court and politics of England: the Premier Flimnap represents Sir Robert Walpole, the High-heels and Low-heels are the Tories and Whigs, the Small-endians and Big-endians stand for Papists and Protestants; Blefuscu is France; and Gulliver's retreat thither provides an apology for Ormond and Bolingbroke's flight to Paris at the accession of the House of Hanover. But though these particulars are obsolete, the truths illustrated by the scenes and situations of the story will never cease to amuse and interest us, so long as party motives control our politics, and sectarian principles influence our religion. In the second part, the Voyage to Brobdingnag, the satire is more general; and we are offered such a view of human actions and sentiments as we may reasonably suppose to have been taken by creatures of immense strength and energy; but, at the same

time, of frigid temper and calculating disposition. The fable here, however, is less artistically managed than in the preceding part; the Brobdingnagians are too exaggerated in drawing, and the execution does not always correspond with the author's conception. In the third part, the voyage to Laputa, we meet with a vehement attack on the pretensions of science, or rather of the empiricism which audaciously pretends to be scientific. The attacks upon the Royal Society are amusing, but unfair; and the allusions to the foibles of Sir Isaac Newton are of such a nature as to suggest that Swift failed to appreciate that great philosopher's intellectual power. Much more satisfactory is the satirist's wit when it strikes at the follies of natural and mathematical magic, the absurdities of the schoolmen, and the schemes of political projectors. The episode of the Struldbugs seems to me essentially painful. Of the fourth part, the voyage to the land of the Houhynhyms, my estimate must be unfavourable. The extravagance of the idea is not redeemed by the force and vehemence with which it has been realised—a force and vehemence which have in them an element of savagery. The coarseness of the satire is not less conspicuous than its cynicism; and there must have been a radical unsoundness in the intellect which created the Houhynhyms and the Yahoos, the former as impossible as the latter are bestial. Scott contends that the picture of the Yahoos, odious and repulsive as it is, presents to the reader a moral use. But is this really the case? Was ever anyone the better for studying it? To my mind, the gigantic exaggeration and unnaturalness of the conception defeat the object—if, indeed, Swift had any other object in view than the gratification of his hatred of mankind. In reading of the disgusting manners and habits of the Yahoos, we do not recognise them as applicable to humanity; the caricature is so gross that the features of the original are not discernible. Scott is

compelled to acknowledge that even a moral purpose will not justify the repellent nakedness with which Swift has sketched this horrible picture of mankind degraded to the condition of the brutes: since a moralist ought to hold, with the Romans, that crimes of atrocity should be exposed and punished, but those of flagitious impurity punished and concealed. Nor is it just—and not being just it cannot be artistic—to put forward a leper in all the loathsomeness of his disease as a specimen of healthy manhood. From an artistic point of view, indeed, this fourth part, which is the saddest, is also the weakest. It is not so probable in its improbabilities; it lacks that realism, that verisimilitude, which the reader demands in the wildest fictions, if he be required to accept them as serious inventions. 'Giants and pigmies the reader can conceive; for, not to mention their being the ordinary machinery of romance, we are accustomed to see, in the inferior orders of creation, a disproportion of size between those of the same generic description, which may parallel (among some reptile tribes at least) even the fiction of Gulliver. But the mind rejects, as utterly impossible, the supposition of a nation of horses placed in houses which they could not build, fed with corn which they could neither sow, reap, nor save, possessing cows which they could not milk, depositing that milk in vessels which they could not make, and, in short, performing a hundred purposes of rational and social life, for which their external structure altogether unfits them.'

'When Gulliver first lands among the Yahoos,' says Thackeray, 'the naked howling wretches clamber up trees and assault him, and he describes himself as "almost stifled with the filth which fell about him." The reader of the fourth part of *Gulliver's Travels* is like the hero himself in this instance. It is Yahoo language: a monster gibbering shrieks, and gnashing imprecations against mankind —tearing down all shreds of modesty, past all sense of

manliness and shame; filthy in word, filthy in thought, furious, raging, obscene.'

Swift was again in London in 1727; but was recalled to Dublin, towards the end of the year, by Stella's dangerous illness. On his arrival he found her in the last stage of decay; but cheered by his presence and his affectionate care she lingered on for two or three months. Her death, on the 28th of January 1728, was a blow from which he never recovered. Left alone in the world, he had no longer that resource of a constant and devoted love which had enabled him to struggle so long against his increasing infirmities; and though he endeavoured to divert his mind by engaging his attention in public affairs, he could not resist the rapid approaches of disease. The shadows gathered over him; and as they approached, I think he must have deeply regretted the failure he had made of his life, and, I would fain believe, his deplorable mistake in dragging his great intellect through mire and pollution, instead of offering it, pure and unstained, on the altar of God, and dedicating it to the service of his fellow-men. For some years he continued to exercise a dominant influence in Ireland—an influence not less deserved by his large-minded and large-hearted benevolence than by his active and powerful mind. Everybody resorted to 'the Dean' for assistance or advice. Lord Carteret, the Lord-Lieutenant, humorously said, that when people asked him how he governed Ireland, he said, that he pleased Dr Swift.

The activity of his pen did not relax until 1736; and, among other compositions, he produced his *Directions to Servants*, and his *Polite Conversation*—both smirched with obscenity, though their author was then grey with old age. It was in this year that his memory failed him, and his intellect seemed suddenly to lose all its vigour and vivacity. Sheridan says, that the irascible passions which at all times he had found difficult to keep within due

bounds, now raged without control, and made him a torment to himself and all about him. An unusually long fit of deafness and giddiness, which lasted almost a year, disqualified him for conversation, and made him lose all relish for society. He could not amuse himself with writing; and a resolution he had made never to wear spectacles, prevented him from reading. Fully conscious of his decadence, he wrote—

> See how the Dean begins to break!
> Poor gentleman, he droops apace;
> You plainly find it in his face.
> That old vertigo in his head
> Will never leave him till he's dead.
> Besides, his memory decays;
> He recollects not what he says;
> He cannot call his friends to mind,
> Forgets the place where last he dined;
> Plies you with stories o'er and o'er,
> He told them fifty times before.

In 1742 his understanding totally failed him, and it became necessary to appoint legal guardians to his person and estate. A fit of frenzy followed, and was prolonged for some months; after which he sank into the condition of 'a helpless changeling.' In the course of three years he spoke, it is said, only twice or thrice. At length, when this 'awful moral lesson' had been protracted from 1743 until the 19th of October 1745, it pleased God to release him from his long agony, and he passed away, without pang or sigh, in the seventy-eighth year of his age.

The national gratitude then broke forth in all its fervour. The interval during which 'the Dean' had been dead to the world was forgotten; he was wept and lamented as if he had died in the full course of his labours for the public weal. His house was surrounded by the young and old of all classes, eager to offer the last tribute of affectionate sorrow. Locks of his hair were sought with so much eagerness that to the enthu-

siasm of the citizens of Dublin the lines of Shakspeare were felicitously applied :—

> 'Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
> And dying mention it within their wills,
> Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
> Unto their issue.'

His remains were interred in the great aisle of St Patrick's Cathedral; and by way of monument a tablet of black marble was placed against the wall. The lines graven upon it were written by himself, and no fitter epitaph could be suggested.

HIC DEPOSITUM EST CORPUS
JONATHAN SWIFT, S.T.P.,
HUJUS ECCLESIÆ CATHEDRALIS
DECANI :
UBI SÆVA INDIGNATIO
ULTERIUS COR LACERARE NEQUIT.
ABI, VIATOR,
ET IMITARES, SI POTERIS,
STRENUUM PRO VIRILI LIBERTATE VINDICEM.
OBIIT ANNO (1745)
MENSIS (OCTOBRIS) DIE (19)
ÆTATIS ANNO (78).

I have spoken of Swift's work in prose: of his achievements in a metrical form I hasten to adopt Professor Nichol's estimate :—

'Most of his occasional verses, written at intervals from 1690 till 1733, are either frigid compliments or thinly veiled invectives, many of which, like the epigrams that disfigure the otherwise exquisite pages of Herrick, have all the coarseness with only half the wit of Martial. His addresses to women are, as might be expected, singularly unfortunate . . . He can never get out of his satiric pulpit, and while saluting his mistresses as nymphs, he lectures them as school girls . . . His society verses are like those of a man writing with his feet, for he delights to trample on what others caress. Often he seems, among singing birds, a vulture screeching over carrion. Of his graver satire pieces, the *Rhapsody on Poetry* has the fatal drawback of suggesting a comparison with *The Dunciad*. In the *Beast's Confession*, vivid and trenchant though it be, the author appears occa-

sionally to intrude on the gardens of Prior and Gay. Had he been an artist in verse, he might have written something in English more like the sixth satire of Juvenal than Churchill ever succeeded in doing. But Swift despised art; he wrote rough-shod, on his ambling cynic steed, through bad double rhyme and halting rhythm, to his end. War with the cold steel of prose was his business: his poems are the side-lights and pastimes of a man too grim to join heartily in any game.'

Joseph Addison.

For English men of letters the Reign of Queen Anne was the Golden Age. Never at any other period has Society so fully and frankly recognised their claims. Never have they reaped such liberal and honourable rewards. Never have rank and wealth extended to them so generous a sympathy. Even the State did not think them unworthy of its patronage. Poets and essayists were admitted to high office, and entrusted with diplomatic and political responsibilities. In our own time ministers and politicians have gained distinction in literature; but in Queen Anne's reign literary men became ministers and politicians.[1] The difference is notable, and indicates the social characteristics of the two eras. We do not now bestow places and pensions upon our popular authors; they are reserved for the scions of aristocratic families, or the nominees of influential personages, or the men who vote straight in the House of Commons. We read with surprise that Matthew Prior was employed as a Secretary of Embassy; that Steele was made a Commissioner of Stamps; that John Hughes became Secretary for the Commission of the Peace; that Addison held the posts of Chief Secretary of Ireland and Secretary of State. Nor did these preferments bring with them any degrading obligation. On the contrary, to be a scholar and a man of letters was to possess a charter of independence. The *litterateurs* of the

[1] The preferment to a Cabinet Office of Mr John Morley, is, perhaps, the exception to the rule (1886).

day were free of the most influential as well as the most exclusive circles in London. Harley, Bolingbroke, and Godolphin, Halifax, Sunderland, and Wharton welcomed them to their tables, bestowed upon them their confidence, and thanked them for their advice. Sometimes they were rewarded for this handsome behaviour with those splendid compliments which confer immortality; but there was nothing servile in the relation between them —nothing which humiliated or dishonoured either party to it.

As a typical man of letters in this Golden Age we may fairly select JOSEPH ADDISON. He has a right to a foremost place, not only as one of the best of English essayists and a poet of some merit, but as a scholar, a gentleman, and a Christian. Providence seems to have sent him into the world to show how pure and serene a life may be led even by one who treads the thorny path of literature. Harsh judgments are often passed upon literary men, but who could have a word of censure for Addison? Who does not bow with reverence before that stainless career and lofty character which are part of the glory of English literature? Who does not see how much better and wiser he was than his fellows? Who does not recollect the justness of his judgments, the delicate felicitousness of his criticisms? Who does not admire that calm and equable temper, that graceful and gracious manner, that unaffected and sincere piety? And who is not grateful to him for those charming Essays in which a refined taste, a rare humour, and a keen observation blend so happily with an inexhaustible cheerfulness of spirit?

It is difficult to say anything about this admirable writer after Macaulay and Thackeray. These great painters have drawn his likeness with a skill and a success which makes meaner men ashamed to bring forward their daubs. They show us the satirist whose satire never wounded; the kind judge whose sentences never fell too

heavily; the humorist whose mirth was never offensive; and the true gentleman who never betrayed a friend or stabbed an enemy in the back. 'Commend me to this dear preacher without orders,' says Thackeray, 'this parson in the tye-wig. When this man looks from the world, whose weaknesses he describes so benevolently, up to the Heaven which shines over us all, I can hardly fancy a human face lighted up with a more serene rapture: a human intellect thrilling with a purer love and adoration than Joseph Addison's.' 'After full inquiry and impartial reflection,' says Macaulay, 'we have long been convinced that he deserved as much love and esteem as can be justly claimed by any of our infirm and erring race. Some blemishes may undoubtedly be detected in his character; but the more carefully it is examined, the more will it appear, to use the phrase of the old anatomists, sound in the noble parts, free from all taint of perfidy, of cowardice, of cruelty, of ingratitude, of envy. Men may easily be named in whom some particular good disposition has been more conspicuous than in Addison. But the just harmony of qualities, the exact temper between the stern and the humane virtues, the habitual observance of every law, not only of moral rectitude, but of moral grace and dignity, distinguish him from all men who have been tried by equally strong temptations, and about whose conduct we possess equally full information.'

The only failings which stain the whiteness of his character are his love of wine and his tendency to surround himself with a circle of admiring votaries. The former he shared with most of his contemporaries. The age in which he lived was an age of conviviality; and the capacity to take his three bottles was one of the signs of a fine gentleman. In Addison's case it was partly due to his excessive shyness. In society he was dumb until his tongue was loosened by wine; it was only then that he gave free play to his remarkable powers of conversation

To his excessive modesty Macaulay ascribes his other foible. The men who gathered around him, prostrating themselves at his feet, were in all respects his inferiors, and some of them had very serious faults. These did not escape his keenly-observant eye, and the feeling with which he regarded most of his humble companions was one of benevolence, slightly flavoured with a gentle contempt. But 'he was at perfect ease in their company; he was grateful for their devoted attachment; and he loaded them with benefits. Their veneration for him appears to have exceeded that with which Johnson was regarded by Boswell, or Warburton by Hurd. It was not in the power of adulation to turn such a head, or deprave such a heart, as Addison's. But it must in candour be admitted that he contracted some of the faults which can scarcely be avoided by any person who is so unfortunate as to be the oracle of a small literary coterie.'

To his rare powers as a conversationalist his contemporaries bear abundant witness. Pope, who did not love him, admits that he was 'perfect good company with intimates, and had something more charming in his conversation than I ever knew in any other man; but with any mixture of strangers, and sometimes only with one, he seemed to preserve his dignity much, with a stiff sort of silence.' Steele, himself a lively and clever talker, said that his friend's conversation was at once the most polished and the most mirthful that could be imagined; that it was Terence and Catullus in one, heightened by an exquisite something which was neither Terence nor Catullus, but Addison alone. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, than whom no more competent judge could be found, declared that she had known all the wits of the time, and that Addison was the best company in the world. And Dr Young, criticising him from a different point of view, said, that when Addison was at his ease —and he was most at ease with a few of his intimates,

or better still, with only one listener—he poured out so noble a strain of thought and language as to chain every hearer's attention.

Addison claims our just consideration both as a writer of English verse and a writer of English prose. He was also a Latinist of very considerable merit. His knowledge of the later Latin poets was profound, and he imitated them with great skill and taste. In his *Battle of the Cranes and Pygmies*[1] he goes beyond mere imitation, and throws over his subject a delightful flavour of original fancy. He was in his twenty-second year when he made his first appearance as an English versifier, addressing to Henry Sacheverel, at his request,

> 'A short account of all the Muse-possest
> That down from Chaucer's days to Dryden's times
> Have spent their noble rage in British rhymes.'

His criticisms deal with Chaucer, Spenser, Cowley, Milton, Waller, Roscommon, Denham, Dryden, Congreve, Montagu, and Dorset, and are generally judicious, though sometimes unsympathetic. The metrical form adopted is that of the so-called heroic couplet, with the artificial cadences which French example had made popular. The best thing in this early effort is Addison's warm recognition of the genius of Milton:—

> 'Whate'er his pen describes I more than see,
> Whilst every verse, arrayed in majesty,
> Bold and sublime, my whole attention draws,
> And seems above the critic's nicer laws.'

Continuing his poetic labours, he published a translation of part of the Fourth Georgic, and in 1695 his *Address to King William*, which is about as commonplace and artificial as English loyal effusions generally are. Its frigidity chills the reader so completely, that he forgets to be amused by its extravagance. Travelling in Italy and

[1] *Gerano-Pygmæomachia.*

Switzerland he composed, in 1701, his *Letter from Italy*, and inscribed it to Lord Halifax. By comparing it with *The Traveller* or *Childe Harold*, we see how differently a similar subject is treated by men infused with the true poetic spirit; but though it will not bear so arduous a test, we must pronounce it agreeably and smoothly written, with some happy descriptive passages, and an apostrophe to Liberty not deficient in vigour and sincerity. Thus it runs:—

'O Liberty, thou goddess heav'nly bright,
Profuse of bliss, and pregnant with delight!
Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign,
And smiling Plenty leads thy wanton train;
Eased of her load, Subjection grows more light,
And Poverty looks cheerful in thy sight;
Thou mak'st the gloomy face of nature gay,
Giv'st beauty to the sun and pleasure to the day.
Thee, goddess, thee Britannia's isle adores:
How has she oft exhausted all her stores,
How oft in fields of death thy presence sought,
Nor thinks the mighty prize too dearly bought!
On foreign mountains may the sun refine
The grape's soft juice, and mellow it to wine,
With citron groves adorn a distant soil,
And the fat olive swell with floods of oil:
We envy not the warmer clime that lies
In ten degrees of more indulgent skies,
Nor at the coarseness of our heaven repine,
Though o'er our heads the frozen Pleiads shine:
'Tis liberty that crowns Britannia's isle,
That makes her barren rocks and her bleak mountains smile.
Others with tow'ring piles may please the sight
And in their proud aspiring domes delight:
A nicer touch to the stretched canvas give,
Or teach their animated rocks to live:
'Tis Britain's care to watch o'er Europe's fate
And hold in balance each contending state,
To threaten bold presumptuous kings with war,
And answer her afflicted neighbour's prayer.

The Dane and Swede, roused up by fierce alarms,
Bless the wise conduct of her pious arms:
Soon as her fleets appear their terrors cease,
And all the northern world lies hushed in peace.'

The great battle of Blenheim was fought on the 13th of August 1704. It seemed proper enough that poetry should be called in to celebrate the military genius which, in one day, had changed the face of Europe, saved the Empire, and rolled back the tide of French aggression; and Lord Godolphin, the Treasurer, applied to Addison to undertake the task. Addison was a Whig and a patriot; and in both capacities the task was probably a pleasure. But, unfortunately, he was not a poet, and instead of such a breathing, glowing, living lyric as that in which Drayton has sung the glories of Agincourt, he produced a decorous and even elegant composition, in the inevitable heroic couplets, which fails to excite any warmth of emotion in the most patriotic reader. Its chief merit is a negative one—its author, with equal good sense and good taste, dispenses with mythological machinery, and refrains from hyperbolical adulation. He has the discernment to appreciate Marlborough's characteristic qualities as a commander, and the judgment to praise them with manly frankness. Warton called *The Campaign* a 'gazette in rhyme;' it is something better than this, and in one passage at least attains to a more than ordinary elevation. We allude to the celebrated comparison of Marlborough to an angel controlling the whirlwind. It may be, as Macaulay suggests, that part of the effect which it produced when the poem first appeared, was due to its felicitous allusion to the Great Storm which had recently swept over England, frightening the isle from its propriety; but even now it can be read with pleasure, and at least one couplet has passed into our stock of proverbial quotations and household words:—

'Methinks I hear the drum's tumultuous sound,
The victor's shouts and dying groans confound,
The dreadful burst of cannon rend the skies,
And all the thunder of the battle rise.
'Twas then great Marlbro's mighty soul was proved,
That, in the shock of charging hosts unmoved,
Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,
Examined all the dreadful scenes of war;
In peaceful thought the field of death surveyed,
To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid,
Inspired repulsed battalions to engage,
And taught the doubtful battle when to rage.
So when an angel, by divine command,
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
And, pleased th' Almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.'

This seems to me happily, tersely, and vigorously expressed. But I acknowledge that, in my opinion, Addison reaches a higher poetical strain in the well-known lines so frequently quoted in our children's anthologies. What can be more full of quiet beauty and hushed adoration and grateful feeling than the following?—

'Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth;
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.
What though, in solemn silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
What though no real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found;
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine

In 1706 Addison wrote the opera of 'Rosamond.' It was set to music by Mr Thomas Clayton, and so indifferently that it ran only three nights. To Clayton's part I have referred in an earlier chapter. Of the poet's, Dr Johnson speaks warmly: the subject, he says, is well chosen, and the fiction pleasing; the thoughts are sometimes great, and sometimes tender; the versification is easy and gay. There is doubtless some advantage, he adds, in the shortness of the lines, which there is little temptation to load with expletive epithets. The whole drama is airy and elegant, engaging in its process, and pleasing in its conclusion. Macaulay is not less eulogistic: 'The smoothness with which the verses glide, and the elasticity with which they bound, is, to our ears, at least, very pleasing. We are inclined to think that if Addison had left heroic couplets to Pope, and blank verse to Rowe, and had employed himself in writing airy and spirited songs, his reputation as a poet would have stood far higher than it now does.' It is presumptuous to differ on a point of literary taste with Macaulay; but for my part, I am compelled to deny that Addison possessed a spark of lyrical genius, and the songs in 'Rosamond,' smooth as is their versification, seem to me fatally artificial in conception and expression.

Apart from his share in the *Spectator*, Addison is probably best known to the public by his tragedy of 'Cato,' quotations from which are still preserved in our elocutionary manuals. The greater portion of it was written while he was on his travels; but he had kept it in his desk for years, shrinking from the risk of a public failure. At length, in 1713, he was persuaded to complete and produce it, his political friends believing that the audience would discover 'some analogy between the followers of Cæsar and the Tories, between Sempronius and the apostate Whigs, between Cato, struggling to the last for the liberties of Rome, and the band of patriots who still stood

firm round Halifax and Wharton.' A prologue was furnished by Pope, and an epilogue by Garth. A triumphant success crowned its production; every telling allusion was emphasised by cheers and counter cheers; and the curtain eventually fell amidst a tumult of applause. As each political faction naturally professed to be as patriotic as the other, the contention between them was which should be the more vociferous in its praise.

'Cato' was immediately translated into French, and German, and Italian; and its adhesion to the unities has always secured it a greater popularity abroad than on the English stage. It is now never acted; and we are convinced that no London audience in these days would sit through its five acts of cold and polished rhetoric. There is no heart in it; it never kindles with the glow of real passion. While thus decided in our judgment, we may justly admit that it contains much excellent dialogue and declamation. 'Among plays fashioned on the French model it must be allowed to rank high: not, indeed, with "Athalie" or "Saul," but, we think, not below "Cinna," and certainly above any other English tragedy of the same school, above many of the plays of Corneille, above many of the plays of Voltaire and Alfieri, and above some plays of Racine. Be this as it may, we have little doubt that "Cato" did as much as the *Tatlers*, *Spectators*, and *Freeholders* united, to raise Addison's fame among his contemporaries.' The plot is necessarily simple, but its construction shows a good deal of care; and some of the situations are not ineffective. In the closet 'Cato' may still be read with pleasure; and not a few of its lines have been adopted into the public currency. As, for example:—

> 'The ways of Heaven are dark and intricate.'

> 'Conspiracies no sooner should be formed
> Than executed.'

'Tis not in mortals to command success.
But we'll do more, Sempronius; we'll deserve it.'

'Better to die ten thousand, thousand deaths
Than wound my honour.'

'The woman that deliberates is lost.'

'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.'

To Addison as a writer in prose I offer a larger and profounder homage than to Addison as a writer in verse. The author of the *Spectator* stands on an immeasurably higher plane than the author of 'Cato.' As a dramatist the utmost that can be said is that he did not wholly fail. As an essayist he introduced a new element of pleasure into our literature, and attained a success so remarkable that he has distanced almost all competitors. The immortal series of papers on life, manners, and letters which bear the general title of the *Spectator* were begun in March 1711, a few weeks after the cessation of the earlier series known as the *Tatler*. The Spectator himself is, no doubt, a portrait of Addison painted by Addison's own hand. He has spent a studious youth at the University, has travelled over the classic lands of Europe, and finally has taken up his residence in London, to watch with observant eye its different phases of society. He has studied men and manners in the metropolitan club and coffee-houses, with the wits and poets at Will's, with the parsons at Child's, with the politicians at the St James's, and with the *savants* and philosophers at the Grecian. In the morning he watches the tide of commercial speculation ebbing and flowing in the Exchange; in the evening he is a regular attendant in the pit of Drury Lane Theatre. But he is the victim of a tyrannous shyness, which padlocks his lips except in the ease and freedom of a friendly circle.[1]

[1] 'I have observed,' says Addison, in the opening paper, "that a reader

To Steele was due the first sketch of this friendly circle. It included a Templar, a soldier, a clergyman, and a merchant—of whom nothing need be said—and an old country baronet and a battered town rake, who, as Sir Roger de Coverley and Will Honeycomb, live in our memories for ever. But the touches which gave these last-named characters life, and form, and substance, came from the dexterous and felicitous pencil of Addison. He took Steele's outlines and filled them up with deft contrasts of light and shade; and the two pictures are so exquisitely finished that in the whole gallery of English fiction there are none which more thoroughly engage our sympathies.

'The plan of the *Spectator*,' says Macaulay, 'must be allowed to be both original and eminently happy. Every valuable essay in the series may be read with pleasure separately; yet the five or six hundred essays form a whole, and a whole which has the interest of a novel. It must be remembered, too, that at that time no novel, giving a lively and powerful picture of the common life and manners of

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seldom peruses a book with pleasure till he knows whether the writer of it be a black or a fair man, of a mild or a choleric disposition, married or a bachelor, with other particulars of a like nature, that conduce very much to the right understanding of an author. To gratify this curiosity, which is so natural to a reader, I design this paper and my next as prefatory discourses to my following writings; and shall give some account in them of the persons that are engaged in this work. As the chief trouble of compiling, digesting, and correcting will fall to my share, I must do myself the justice to open the work with my own history. . . .

'I find that during my nonage I had the reputation of a very sullen youth, but was always the favourite of my schoolmaster, who used to say that my parts were solid and would wear well. I had not been long at the university before I distinguished myself by a most profound silence; for during the space of eight years, excepting in the public exercises of the college, I scarce uttered the quantity of a hundred words; and, indeed, I do not remember that I ever spoke three sentences together in my whole life. . . .

'I have passed my latter years in this city, where I am frequently seen in most public places, though there are not more than half-a-dozen of my select friends that know me. . . . There is no place of general resort wherein I do not often make my appearance; sometimes I am seen thrusting my head into a round of politicians at "Will's," and listening with great attention to the

England, had appeared. Richardson was working as a compositor. Fielding was robbing bird's nests. Smollett was not yet born. The narrative, therefore, which connects together the Spectator's Essays, gave to our ancestors their first taste of an exquisite and untried pleasure. That narrative was indeed constructed with no art or labour. The events were such events as occur every day. Sir Roger comes up to town to see Eugenie, as the worthy baronet always calls Prince Eugene, goes with the Spectator on the water to Spring Gardens, walks among the tombs in the Abbey, and is frightened by the Mohawks, but conquers his apprehension so far as to go to the theatre when the "Distressed Mother" is acted. The Spectator pays a visit in the summer to Coverley Hall, is charmed with the old house, the old butler, and the old chaplain, eats a jack caught by Will Wimble, rides to the assizes, and hears a point of law discussed by Tom Touchy. At last a letter from the honest butler brings to the club the news that Sir Roger is dead. Will Honeycomb marries and reforms at sixty. The club breaks up; and the Spectator resigns his functions. Such events can hardly be said to form a plot; yet they are related with such truth, such grace, such wit, such humour, such pathos, such knowledge of the human heart, such knowledge of the ways of the world, that they charm us on the hundredth perusal. We have not the least doubt that if Addison had written a novel on an extensive plan, it would have been superior to any that we possess.

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narratives that are made in these little circular audiences. Sometimes I smoke a pipe at "Child's," and whilst I seem attentive to nothing but the *Postman*, overhear the conversation of every table in the room. I appear on Tuesday night at "St James's Coffee-house"; and sometimes join the little committee of politics in the inner room, as one who comes to hear and improve. My face is likewise very well known at the "Grecian," the "Cocoa Tree," and in the theatres both of Drury Lane and the Haymarket. I have been taken for a merchant upon the Exchange for above these two years; and sometimes pass for a Jew in the assembly of stock jobbers at "Jonathan's." In short, wherever I see a cluster of people, I mix with them, though I never open my lips but in my own club.

'Thus I live in the world rather as a "Spectator" of mankind than as one of the species; by which means I have made myself a speculative statesman, soldier, merchant, and artisan, without ever meddling in any practical part in life. I am very well versed in the theory of a husband or a father, and can discover the errors in the economy, business, and diversions of others better than those who are engaged in them—as standers-by discover blots which are apt to escape those who are in the game. . . . In short, I have acted, in all the parts of my life, as a looker-on, which is the character I intend to pursue in this paper.'

As it is, he is entitled to be considered, not only as the greatest of the English essayists, but as the forerunner of the great English novelists.'

A singular advantage of Steele's plan, as developed by Addison, is the extraordinary variety and scope of treatment of which it admits. We are introduced to a constant succession of new scenes, and made familiar with almost every aspect of English social life. The club, the theatre, the coffee-house, the market-place, the fine lady's boudoir, the humours of the public streets, the manorial mansion of the 'old English gentleman,' the village church—to each we are introduced by a cicerone whose quick and exact observation nothing escapes. This diversity of interest, and this kaleidoscopic reflection of the manners of the time, cannot be better illustrated than by quoting the titles of a few of the papers taken haphazard. Account of a Grinning-Match, Whims of Lottery Adventures, Affected Method of Psalm Singing, The Trunk-maker in the Theatre, the Cries of London, Female Head-dress, On Pin-Money, Clarinda's Journal of a Week, Spring Gardens, Female Equestrians, Letter on Gardening. But the *Spectator* is not wholly made up of these social photographs: it contains some admirable critical papers, especially the series of eighteen by which Addison taught the English people to admire Milton, and some finely-written, high-toned moral essays, such as the series of eleven on the pleasures of Imagination.

Of Steele's share in the *Spectator* I shall speak by-and-by. Here it may be noted that the first number appeared on the 1st of March 1711. It was published daily, at the price of a penny, until the 1st of August 1712, when a halfpenny stamp-duty was imposed upon newspapers and periodicals. The price was then raised to twopence, which adversely affected the sale, but it was continued by Steele and Addison to No. 555 on the 6th of December 1712. In 1714 Addison made an unsuccessful effort to

revive it (June 18th to December 20th). It is well known that the contributors signed their papers with letters borrowed from the word CLIO ; Addison using the initial capital C.

The *Spectator* is within everybody's reach, and quotations from it are unnecessary. But if any of my readers are unacquainted with its pages, they may be glad of a sample of its *merum sal*, and I hasten to transcribe, therefore, the exquisitely pathetic account of the death of Sir Roger de Coverley, which can be compared with nothing in our literature but the death of Colonel Newcome. It is supposed to be written by the good old knight's butler :[1]—

HONOURED SIR,—Knowing that you was my old master's good friend, I could not forbear sending you the melancholy news of his death, which has afflicted the whole country, as well as his poor servants, who loved him, I may say, better than we did our lives. I am afraid he caught his death the last county sessions, where he would go to see justice done to a poor widow woman, and her fatherless children, that had been wronged by a neighbouring gentleman : for you know my good master was always the poor man's friend. Upon his coming home, the first complaint he made was, that he had lost his roast-beef stomach, not being able to touch a sirloin, which was served up according to custom : and you know he used to take great delight in it. From that time forward he grew worse and worse, but still kept a good heart to the last. Indeed we were once in great hopes of his recovery, upon a kind message that was sent him from the widow lady whom he had made love to the forty last years of his life; but this only proved a lightening before his death. He has bequeathed to this lady, as a token of his love, a great pearl necklace, and a couple of silver bracelets set with jewels, which belonged to my good old lady his mother : he has bequeathed the fine white gelding, that he used to ride a-hunting upon, to his chaplain, because he thought he would be kind to him ; and has left you all his books. He has, moreover, bequeathed to the chaplain a very pretty tenement with good lands about it. It being a very cold day when he made his will, he left for mourning, to every man in the parish, a great frieze coat, and to every woman, a black riding-hood. It was a most moving sight to see him take leave of his poor servants, commending us all,

[1] The *Spectator*, No. 517, Thursday, October 23d.

for our fidelity, whilst we were not able to speak a word for weeping. As we most of us are grown grey-headed in our dear master's service, he has left us pensions and legacies which we may live very comfortably upon the remaining part of our days. He has bequeathed a great deal more in charity, which is not yet come to my knowledge, and it is peremptorily said in the parish, that he has left money to build a steeple to the church, for he was heard to say some time ago, that if he lived two years longer, Coverley church should have a steeple to it. The chaplain tells everybody that he made a very good end, and never speaks of him without tears. He was buried, according to his own directions, among the family of the Coverlies, on the left hand of his father Sir Arthur. The coffin was carried by six of his tenants, and the pall held up by six of the quorum : the whole parish followed the corpse with heavy hearts, and in their mourning suits ; the men in frieze and the women in riding-hoods. Captain Sentry, my master's nephew, has taken possession of the hall-house, and the whole estate. When my old master saw him, a little before his death, he shook him by the hand, and wished him joy of the estate which was falling to him, desiring him only to make a good use of it, and to pay the several legacies, and the gifts of charity, which he told him he had left as quit-rents upon the estate. The captain truly seems a courteous man, though says but little. He makes much of those whom my master loved, and shows great kindness to the old house-dog, that you know my poor master was so fond of. It would have gone to your heart to have heard the moans the dumb creature made on the day of my master's death. He has never joyed himself since ; no more has any of us. It was the melancholiest day for the poor people that ever happened in Worcestershire. This being all from, honoured Sir, your most sorrowful servant, EDWARD BISCUIT.

P. S.—My master desired, some weeks before he died, that a book which came up to you by the carrier, should be given to Sir Andrew Freeport in his name.

In his character as 'the Spectator' Addison adds :—'This letter, notwithstanding the poor butler's manner of writing it, gave us such an idea of our good old friend, that upon the reading of it, there was not a dry eye in the club. Sir Andrew, opening the book, found it to be a collection of Acts of Parliament. There was, in particular, the Act of Uniformity, with some passages in it marked by

Sir Roger's own hand. Sir Andrew found that they related to two or three points which he had disputed with Sir Roger the last time he appeared at the club. Sir Andrew, who would have been merry at such an incident on another occasion, at the sight of the old man's handwriting, burst into tears, and put the book in his pocket. Captain Sentry informs me, that the Knight has left rings and mourning for every one in the club.'

We must give one specimen of Addison's lighter style. It purports to be a letter addressed to the *Spectator* by a woman who has the unhappiness to be tied to an effeminate husband :—

MR SPECTATOR,—You have given us a lively picture of that kind of husband who comes under the denomination of the hen-pecked; but I do not remember that you have ever touched upon one that is of the quite different character, and who, in several places of England, goes by the name of a Cot-quean. I have the misfortune to be joined for life with one of this character, who in reality is more a woman than I am. He was bred up under the tuition of a tender mother, till she had made him as good an housewife as herself. He could preserve apricots, and make jellies, before he had been two years out of the nursery. He was never suffered to go abroad for fear of catching cold: when he should have been hunting down a buck, he was by his mother's side learning how to season it, or put it in a crust; and was making paper-boats with his sisters, at an age when other young gentlemen are crossing the seas, or travelling into foreign countries. He has the whitest hand that you ever saw in your life, and raises paste better than any woman in England. These qualifications make him a sad husband: he is perpetually in the kitchen, and has a thousand squabbles with the cook-maid. He is better acquainted with the milk-score than his steward's accounts. I fret to death when I hear him find fault with a dish that is not dressed to his liking, and instructing his friends that dine with him in the best pickle for a walnut, or sauce for an haunch of venison. With all this, he is a very good-natured husband, and never fell out with me in his life but once, upon the over-roasting of a dish of wild-fowl: at the same time, I must own I would rather he was a man of rough temper, that would treat me harshly sometimes, than of such an effeminate busy nature in a province that does not belong to him. Since you have given us the character of a wife who wears the

breeches, pray say something of a husband that wears the petticoat Why should not a female character be as ridiculous in a man, as a male character in one of our sex?—I am, etc.

The *Spectator* was followed on the 1st of March 1713 by another venture of Steele's, which he called the *Guardian*. It differed from its predecessor in discussing public affairs. 'The parties among us,' says Steele, 'are too violent to make it possible to pass them by without observation. As to these matters I shall be impartial, though I cannot be neuter.' Now, impartiality in the treatment of political questions is, I think, an impossibility: certainly, it was to the fervid nature of Steele, and this, perhaps, was the main cause of the *Guardian's* non-success. The *Spectator* was read by everybody; the *Guardian* only by a party. It was published as a daily half-sheet until the 1st of October, ending with its 175th number. But the machinery introduced was bad. Mr Nestor Ironside, an old gentleman, guardian to the Lizard family, and the said family, consisting of Lady Lizard, her sons and daughters, were wholly wanting in the living realism of Sir Roger de Coverley and his friends. Many of the papers in the *Guardian* were, however, of conspicuous attraction. Both Pope and Tickell contributed, and Addison gave his powerful help when sixty-six numbers had appeared, by which time he had got rid of the anxiety and labour attending the production of his 'Cato.' I do not know that his papers in the later publication are inferior in their literary qualities to those with which he supplied the earlier, though they have never attained the same popularity.

The grace and skill with which he could 'point a moral' seem to me very pleasantly exemplified in the Barmecide story:[1]—

Schacabac being reduced to great poverty, and having eat nothing

[1] The *Guardian*, No. 162, Sept. 16.

for two days together, made a visit to a noble Barmecide in Persia, who was very hospitable, but withal a great humorist. The Barmecide was sitting at his table, that seemed ready covered for an entertainment. Upon hearing Schacabac's complaint, he desired him to sit down and fall on. He then gave him an empty plate, and asked him how he liked his rice soup? Schacabac, who was a man of wit, and resolved to comply with the Barmecide in all his humours, told him it was admirable, and at the same time, in imitation of the other, lifted up the empty spoon to his mouth with great pleasure. The Barmecide then asked him if he ever saw whiter bread? Schacabac, who saw neither bread nor meat, 'If I did not like it, you may be sure' (says he) 'I should not eat so heartily of it.' 'You oblige me mightily' (replied the Barmecide), 'pray let me help you to this leg of a goose.' Schacabac reached out his plate, and received nothing on it with great cheerfulness. As he was eating very heartily on this imaginary goose, and crying up the same to the skies, the Barmecide desired him to keep a corner of his stomach for a roasted lamb, fed with pistacho nuts, and after having called for it, as though it had really been served up, 'Here is a dish' (says he) 'that you will see at nobody's table but my own.' Schacabac was wonderfully delighted with the taste of it, which is like nothing, says he, I ever eat before. Several other nice dishes were served up in idea, which both of them commended and feasted on after the same manner. This was followed by an invisible dessert, no part of which delighted Schacabac so much as a certain lozenge, which the Barmecide told him was a sweetmeat of his own invention. Schacabac at length, being courteously reproached by the Barmecide that he had no stomach, and that he eat nothing, and, at the same time, being tired with moving his jaws up and down to no purpose, desired to be excused, for that really he was so full he could not eat a bit more. 'Come,' then (says the Barmecide), 'the cloth shall be removed, and you shall taste of my wines, which I may say, without vanity, are the best in Persia.' He then filled both their glasses out of an empty decanter. Schacabac would have excused himself from drinking so much at once, because he said he was a little quarrelsome in his liquor; however, being pressed to it, he pretended to take it off, having beforehand praised the colour, and afterwards the flavour. Being plied with two or three other imaginary bumpers of different wines, equally delicious, and a little vexed with this fantastic treat, he pretended to grow flustered, and gave the Barmecide a good box on the ear, but immediately recovering himself, 'Sir' (says he), 'I beg ten thousand pardons; but I told you before, that it was my misfortune to be quarrelsome in my drink.' The Barmecide could not but smile at the humour of his

guest, and instead of being angry at him, 'I find' (says he) 'thou art a complaisant fellow, and deservest to be entertained in my house. Since thou canst accommodate thyself to my humour, we will now eat together in good earnest.' Upon which, calling for his supper, the rice soup, the goose, the pistacho-lamb, the several other nice dishes, with the dessert, the lozenges, and all the variety of Persian wines, were served up successively, one after another; and Schacabac was feasted in reality with those very things which he had before been entertained with in imagination.

As a specimen of the lightness and incisiveness of his touch, and the sound sense which underlay his sportive humour, we quote the following:[1]—

There is a certain female ornament, by some called a tucker, and by others the neck piece, being a slip of fine linen or muslin that used to run in a small kind of ruffle round the uppermost verge of the women's stays, and by that means covered a great part of the shoulders and bosom. Having thus given a definition, or rather description of the tucker, I must take notice, that our ladies have of late thrown aside this fig-leaf, and exposed, in its primitive nakedness, that gentle swelling of the breast, which it was used to conceal. What their design by it is, they themselves best know.

I observed this as I was sitting the other day by a famous she visitant at my Lady Lizard's, when accidentally, as I was looking upon her face, letting my sight fall into her bosom, I was surprised with beauties which I never before discovered, and do not know where my eye would have run, if I had not immediately checked it. The lady herself could not forbear blushing, when she observed by my looks, that she had made her neck too beautiful and glaring an object, even for a man of my character and gravity. I could scarce forbear making use of my hand to cover so unseemly a sight.

If we survey the pictures of our great-grandmothers in Queen Elizabeth's time, we see them clothed down to the very wrists, and up to the very chin. The hands and face were the only samples they gave of their beautiful persons. The following age of females made larger discoveries of their complexion. They first of all tucked up their garments to the elbow, and notwithstanding the tenderness of the sex, were content, for the information of mankind, to expose their arms to the coldness of the air and injuries of the weather. This

[1] The *Guardian*, No. 100, July 6.

artifice hath succeeded to their wishes, and betrayed many to their arms, who might have escaped them, had they been still concealed.

About the same time, the ladies considering that the neck was a very modest part in a human body, they freed it from those yokes, I mean those monstrous linen ruffs, in which the simplicity of their grandmothers had enclosed it. In proportion as the age refined, the dress still sunk lower, so that when we now say a woman has a handsome neck, we reckon unto it many of the adjacent parts. The disuse of the tucker has still enlarged it, insomuch that the neck of a fine woman at present takes in almost half the body.

Since the female neck thus grows upon us, and the ladies seem disposed to discover themselves to us more and more, I would fain have them tell us once for all, how far they intend to go, and whether they have yet determined among themselves where to make a stop.

For my own part, thin necks, as they call them, are no more than busts of alabaster in my eye. I can look upon

The yielding marble of a snowy breast,

with as much coldness as this line of Mr Waller represents in the object itself. But my fair readers ought to consider that all their beholders are not Nestors. Every man is not sufficiently qualified with age and philosophy, to be an indifferent spectator of such allurements. The eyes of young men are curious and penetrating, their imaginations of a roving nature, and their passions under no discipline or restraint. I am in pain for a woman of rank, when I see her thus exposing herself to the regards of every impudent staring fellow. How can she expect that her quality can defend her, when she gives such provocation? I could not but observe, last winter, that upon the disuse of the neck-piece (the ladies will pardon me if it is not the fashionable term of the art) the whole tribe of oglers gave their eyes a new determination, and stared the fair sex in the neck rather than in the face. To prevent these saucy familiar glances, I would entreat my gentle readers to sew on their tuckers again, to retrieve the modesty of their characters, and not to imitate the nakedness, but the innocence of their mother Eve.

What most troubles and indeed surprises me in this particular [is this], I have observed, that the leaders in this fashion were most of them married women. What their design can be in making themselves bare, I cannot possibly imagine. Nobody exposes wares that are appropriated. When the bird is taken the snare ought to be removed. It was a remarkable circumstance in the institution of the severe Lycurgus. As that great law-giver knew that the wealth and strength of a republic consisted in the multitude of citizens, he did

all he could to encourage marriage: in order to it, he prescribed a certain loose dress for the Spartan maids, in which there were several artificial rents and openings; that, upon putting themselves in motion, discovered several limbs of the body to the beholders. Such were the baits and temptations made use of by that wise law-giver, to incline the young men of his age to marriage. But when the maid was once sped, she was not suffered to tantalise the male part of the commonwealth: her garments were closed up, and stitched together with the greatest care imaginable. The shape of her limbs, and complexion of her body, had gained their ends, and were ever after to be concealed from the notice of the public.

I shall conclude this discourse of the tucker with a moral, which I have taught upon all occasions, and shall still continue to inculcate into my female readers; namely, that nothing bestows so much beauty on a woman as modesty. This is a maxim laid down by Ovid himself, the greatest master in the art of love. He observes upon it, that Venus pleases most when she appears (*semi-reducta*) in a figure withdrawing herself from she eye of the beholder. It is very possible he had in his thoughts the statue which we see in the Venus de Medicis, where she is represented in such a shy, retiring posture, and covers her bosom with one of her hands. In short, modesty gives the mind greater beauty than even the bloom of youth, it bestows on the wife the dignity of a matron, and reinstates the widow in her virginity.

Between December 23d, 1715, and June 29th, 1716 Addison published, in fifty-five numbers, a political journal called the *Freeholder*, in which he strongly maintained the principles of the Revolution and supported the Hanoverian dynasty. *The Old Whig* and the *Reader* (each consisting of two numbers) do not call for detailed notice.

In March 1715 was produced at Drury Lane Theatre, Addison's comedy of *The Drummer*, the main idea of which is the reforming influence exercised upon a fop who pretends to atheism, by a mock ghost of a drummer. The subject is not well adapted to dramatic treatment, nor had Addison any appreciation of the exigencies of the stage. It is no wonder, therefore, that though strongly cast, for Wilks and Cibber and Mills, along with Mrs Oldfield and Mrs Saunders, appeared in the principal characters, it ran

but three nights. I think, however, the reader will turn to it with pleasure, and will agree with Steele that 'an easy and natural vein of humour' runs through its scenes. The moral is enforced in the epilogue, which was spoken by charming Mrs Oldfield :—

'To-night the poet's advocate I stand,
And he deserves the favour at my hand,
Who, in my equipage their cause debating,
Has placed two lovers, and a third in waiting ;
If both the first should from their duty swerve,
There's one behind the wainscot in reserve.
In his next play, if I would take this trouble,
He promised me to make the number double :
In troth 'twas spoke like an obliging creature,
For though 'tis simple, yet it shows good nature.
My help thus asked, I could not choose but grant it,
And really I thought the play would want it,
Void as it is of all the usual arts
To warm your fancies, and to steal your hearts :
No court intrigue, nor city cuckoldom,
No song, no dance, no music—but a drum—
No smutty thought in doubtful phrase exprest,
And, gentlemen, if so, pray, where's the jest ?
When we would raise your mirth, you hardly know
Whether, in strictness, you should laugh or no,
But turn upon the ladies in the pit,
And if they redden, you are sure 'tis wit.
Protect him then, ye fair ones ; for the fair
Of all conditions are his equal care.
He draws a widow, who, of blameless carriage,
True to her jointure, hates a second marriage ;
And, to improve a virtuous wife's delights,
Out of one man contrives two wedding-nights ;
Nay, to oblige the sex in every state,
A nymph of five-and-forty finds her mate.
Too long has marriage, in this tasteless age,
With ill-bred raillery supplied the stage ;
No little scribbler is of wit so bare,
But has his fling at the poor wedded pair.
Our author deals not in conceits so stale :
For should th' examples of his play prevail,

No man need blush, though true to marriage vows,
Nor be a jest, though he should love his spouse.
Thus has he done your British consorts right,
Whose husbands, should they pry like mine to-night,
Would never find you in your conduct slipping,
Though they turned conjurers to take you tripping.'

As a sample of Addison's dialogue we shall transcribe the first scene of the fifth Act, in which Sir George Trumene presents himself disguised in a conjurer's gown before his old servants.

Enter Sir GEORGE *in his conjurer's habit, the* BUTLER *marching before him with two large candles, and the two servants coming after him, one bringing a little table and another a chair.*

But. Ain't please your worship, Mr Conjurer, the steward has given all of us orders to do whatsoever you shall bid us, and to pay you the same respect as if you were our master.

Sir Geo. Thou say'st well.

Gard. An't please your conjurership's worship, shall I set the table down here?

Sir Geo. Here, Peter.

Gard. Peter! he knows my name by his learning—[*Aside*].

Coach. I have brought you, reverend sir, the largest elbow-chair in the house; 'tis that the steward sits in when he holds a court.

Sir Geo. Place it there.

But. Sir, will you please to want anything else?

Sir Geo. Paper, and a pen and ink.

But. Sir, I believe we have paper that is fit for your purpose! my lady's mourning paper, that is blacked at the edges—wou'd you choose to write with a crow-quill?

Sir Geo. There is none better.

But. Coachman, go fetch the paper and standish out of the little parlour.

Coach. [*to the Gardener*] Peter, prithee do thou go along with me: I'm afraid. You know I went with you last night into the garden, when the cookmaid wanted a handful of parsley.

But. Why, you don't think I'll stay with the conjurer by myself!

Gard. Why, you don't think I'll stay with the conjurer by myself!

[*Exeunt* SERVANTS.

Sir Geo. [*solus*] There's nothing, I see, makes such strong alliances as fear. These fellows are all entered into a confederacy against the ghost. There must be abundance of business done in the family at

this rate. But here comes the triple alliance. Who cou'd have thought these three rogues cou'd have found each of 'em an employment in fetching a pen and ink?

Enter GARDENER *with a sheet of paper*, COACHMAN *with a standish, and* BUTLER *with a pen.*

Gard. Sir, there is your paper.

Coach. Sir, there is your standish.

But. Sir, there is your crow-quill pen. I'm glad I have got rid on't—[*Aside*].

Gard. He forgets that he's to make a circle—[*Aside*]. Doctor, shall I help you to a bit of chalk?

Sir Geo. It is no matter.

But. Look ye, sir, I showed you the spot where he's heard oftenest, if your worship can but ferret him out of that old wall in the next room.

Sir Geo. We shall try.

Gard. That's right, John. His worship must let fly all his learning at that old wall.

But. Sir, if I was worthy to advise you, I would have a bottle of good October by me. Shall I set a cup of old stingo at your elbow?

Sir Geo. I thank thee—we shall do without it.

Gard. John, he seems a very good-natured man for a conjurer.

But. I'll take this opportunity of inquiring after a bit of plate I have lost. I fancy, whilst he is in my lady's pay, one may hedge in a question or two into the bargain. Sir, sir, may I try a word in your ear?

Sir Geo. What wouldst thou?

But. Sir, I know I need not tell you that I lost one of my silver spoons last week.

Sir Geo. Marked with a swan's neck.

But. My lady's crest! He knows everything—[*Aside*]. How would your worship advise me to recover it again?

Sir Geo. Hum!

But. What must I do to come at it?

Sir Geo. Drink nothing but small beer for a fortnight—

But. Small beer. Rot-gut!

Sir Geo. If thou drink'st a single drop of ale before fifteen days are expired, it is as much—as thy spoon—is worth.

But. I shall never recover it that way. I'll e'en buy a new one—[*Aside*].

Coach. D'ye mind how they whisper?

Gard. I'll be hanged if he be not asking him something about Nell.

Coach. I'll take this opportunity of putting a question to him about poor Dobbin. I fancy he could give me better counsel than the farrier.

But. [*to the Gardener*] A prodigious man! He knows everything. Now is the time to find out thy pole-axe.

Gard. I have nothing to give him. Does not he expect to have his hand crossed with silver.

Coach. [*to Sir George*] Sir, may a man venture to ask you a question?

Sir Geo. Ask it.

Coach. I have a poor horse in the stable that's bewitched.

Sir Geo. A bay gelding.

Coach. How could he know that?—[*Aside*].

Sir Geo. Bought at Banbury.

Coach. Whew—so it was, o' my conscience—[*whistles*].

Sir Geo. Six years old last Lammas.

Coach. To a day—[*Aside*]. Now, sir, I would know whether the poor beast is bewitched by Goody Crouch or Goody Flye?

Sir Geo. Neither.

Coach. Then it must be Goody Gurton, for she is the next oldest woman in the parish.

Gard. Hast thou done, Robin?

Coach. [*to the Gardener*] He can tell thee anything.

Gard. [*to Sir George*] Sir, I would beg to take you a little further out of hearing.

Sir Geo. Speak.

Gard. The butler and I, Mr Doctor, were both of us in love at the same time with a certain person.

Sir Geo. A woman.

Gard. How could he know that?—[*Aside*].

Sir Geo. Go on.

Gard. This woman has lately had two children at a birth.

Sir Geo. Twins.

Gard. Prodigious! Where would he hear that?—[*Aside*].

Sir Geo. Proceed.

Gard. Now, because I used to meet her sometimes in the garden she has laid them both—

Sir Geo. To thee.

Gard. What a power of learning he must have! He knows everything.—[*Aside*].

Sir Geo. Hast thou done?

Gard. I would desire to know whether I am really father to them both.

Sir Geo. Stand before me; let me survey thee round.

[*Lays his wand upon his head, and makes him turn about.*

Coach. Look yonder, John; the silly dog is turning about under the conjurer's wand. If he has been saucy to him, we shall see him puffed off in a whirlwind immediately.

Sir Geo. Twins dost thou say? [*Still turning him.*

Gard. Ay; are they both mine, d'ye think?

Sir Geo. Own but one of them.

Gard. Ah! but Mrs Abigail will have me take care of them both—she's always for the Butler. If my poor master Sir George had been alive, he wou'd have made him go halves with me.

Sir Geo. What, was Sir George a kind master?

Gard. Was he! Ay, my fellow-servants will bear me witness.

Sir Geo. Did ye love Sir George?

But. Everybody lov'd him.

Coach. There was not a dry eye in the parish at the news of his death—

Gard. He was the best neighbour—

But. The kindest husband—

Coach. The truest friend to the poor—

But. My good lady took on mightily, we all thought it wou'd have been the death of her.

Sir Geo. [*aside*] I protest these fellows melt me! I think the time long till I am their master again, that I may be kind to them.

The humour in this is, it must be confessed unpleasantly thin, while the equivoque is not particularly new.

The other prose works of Addison need not detain us long. They include the three *Dialogues upon the Usefulness of Ancient Medals, especially in relation to the Latin and Greek Poets*, respecting which we may accept Macaulay's criticism. 'In that pleasing work,' he says, 'we find about three hundred passages extracted with great judgment from the Roman poets; but we do not recollect a single passage taken from any Roman orator or historian; and we are confident that not a line is quoted from any Greek writer. No person, who had derived all his information on the subject of medals from Addison, would suspect that the Greek coins were in historical interest equal, and in beauty of execution far superior, to those of

Rome.' There is also an *Essay on the Evidences of the Christian Religion* (1730),[1] in which we recognise more of the religious spirit than of exact scholarship or theological reasoning; *Remarks on Several Poets of Italy*, *The Present State of the War* (1707), *Dissertations on the most Celebrated Roman Poets* (1718), and *Discourses on Ancient and Modern Learning*. It is needless to say that they are written with accuracy, clearness, finish, and judgment; for they are written by Addison.*

* The opera of 'Rosamond' is so little known that some quotations from it may interest the reader. The *dramatis personæ* consist of King Henry; Sir Trusty, Keeper of the Bower; Page, and Messenger; Queen Elinor; Rosamond; and Grideline, wife to Sir Trusty. The scene is laid in Woodstock Park; and in Act i. Scene 1 enter Queen Elinor and Page. The former gives expression to her jealous feelings, and declares her intention of being revenged on her beautiful rival. Scene 2, Sir Trusty apears at the entrance to the Bower, where Rosamond is confined, and in Scene 3 is joined by his wife Grideline, with whom he seems to maintain very indifferent relations. In Scene 4 Rosamond enters, and delivers herself of the following rhymes:—

From walk to walk, from shade to shade,
From stream to purling stream conveyed,
Through all the mazes of the grove,
Through all the mingling tracks I rove,
Turning,
Burning,
Changing,
Ranging,
Full of grief and full of love.
Impatient for my lord's return
I sigh, I pine, I rave, I mourn.
Was ever passion crossed like mine?
To rend my breast,
And break my rest,
A thousand thousand ills combine.
Absence wounds me,
Fear surrounds me,
Guilt confounds me,
Was ever passion crossed like mine?

A messenger arrives in Scene 5, to announce the approach of King Henry. He enters in Scene 6, and holds a short conversation with

[1] This was a posthumous work. Bishop Watson inserted it in his collection of *Theological Tracts*.

Having said so much of Addison as poet and man of letters, we must now glance briefly at the principal incidents of his career.

Sir Trusty, whom he orders 'to guard the bower and watch the gate,' while he and Rosamond renew their vows of love.

In the second Act Grideline reveals her jealousy of Sir Trusty, whom she believes to be enamoured of Rosamond, and the Page undertakes to watch the suspected pair. Meanwhile, the Queen finds her way to her rival's retreat, armed with bowl and dagger, and proffers her a choice of deaths. Rosamond chooses the poison, and dies in melodious couplets :—

My dying soul with fury burns,
And slighted grief to madness turns.
Think not, thou author of my woe,
That Rosamond will leave thee so :
At dead of night,
A glaring sprite,
With hideous screams
I'll haunt thy dreams,
And when the painful night withdraws
My Henry shall revenge my cause.
Oh whither does my frenzy drive !
Forgive my rage, your wrongs forgive.
My veins are froze ; my blood grows chill ;
The weary springs of life stand still ;
The sleep of death benumbs all o'er
My fainting limbs, and I'm no more.

The opening scene of Act iii. shows the spectator a grotto, in which lies King Henry asleep. A cloud descends, supporting two angels, who are supposed to be the guardian spirits of the British kings in war and in peace. From their prophetic colloquy I extract a passage :—

2d Angel. Whatever glorious and renowned
In British annals can be found ;
Whatever actions shall adorn
Britannia's heroes yet unborn,
In dreadful visions shall succeed ;
On fancied fields the Gauls shall bleed,
Cressy shall stand before his eyes,
And Agincourt and Blenheim rise.
1st Angel. See, see, he smiles amidst his trance,
And shakes a visionary lance,
His brain is filled with loud alarms ;
Shouting armies, clashing arms,
The softer points of love deface,
And trumpets sound in every trace.
Both. Glory strives ;
The field is won !
Fame revives,
And love is gone.

He was born at Milston, near Amesbury, in Wiltshire, on the 1st of May 1672. His father was Dr Lancelot Addison, a man of many accomplishments, who had read

Then follows an ingenious allusion to the palace which the gratitude of the country and the genius of Vanbrugh was raising at Woodstock for the hero of Blenheim :—

1st Ang. To calm thy grief, and lull my cares,
Look up and see
What, after long revolving years,
Thy bower shall be!
When time its beauties shall deface,
And only with its ruins grace
The future prospect of the place.
Behold the glorious pile ascending!
Columns swelling, arches bending,
Dome in awful pomp arising,
Art in curious strokes surprising,
Foes in figured fights contending,
Behold the glorious pile ascending!
2d Ang. He sees, he sees the great reward
For Anna's mighty chief prepared.
His growing joys no measure keep,
Too vehement and fierce for sleep.

The scene then changes to that part of the Bower where Sir Trusty lies upon the ground, with the bowl and dagger on the table. The King and Queen enter, and an impassioned colloquy ensues. The reproaches of the former are stayed by the information that Rosamond is not really dead; that the bowl was not filled with poison, but 'with drowsy juices from cold Egyptian drugs distilled:' and that, having recovered from her torpor, she has been placed in a nunnery.

King. I ask no more! secure the fair
In life and bliss: I ask not where:
For ever from my fancy fled,
May the whole world believe her dead,
That no foul minister of vice
Again my sinking soul entice
Its broken passion to renew,
But let me live and die with you.
Queen. How does my heart for such a prize
The vain, censorious world despise!
Though distant ages, yet unborn,
For Rosamond shall falsely mourn,
And with the present times agree
To brand my name with cruelty;
How does my heart for such a prize
The vain, censorious world despise!
But see your slave, while yet I speak,

much and travelled far, and afterwards became Archdeacon of Coventry and Dean of Lichfield; his mother was a sister of Dr Gulston, Bishop of Bristol. Joseph received his early education at the Charterhouse, whence he was removed, while still in his teens, to Queen's College, Oxford. He had been there about two months when some of his Latin verses fell into the hands of Dr Lancaster, the Dean of Magdalene College; who was so struck by their superior merit that he procured the young versifier's election to the house over which he himself presided.

At Magdalene he resided for ten years; first as a Demy, afterwards as a Fellow. He devoted much of his time to the study of the classic writers, and more particularly to the later Latin poets from Lucretius to Claudius, and gained such a command of their language that his Latin compositions, published in the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, have almost the freshness and felicity of his originals. In his twenty-second year appeared his first English composition; 'a copy of verses' addressed to Dryden,—

> 'How long, great poet, shall thy sacred lays
> Provoke our wonder, and transcend our praise?'—

> From his dull trance unfettered break!
> As he the potion shall survive,
> Believe your Rosamond alive.
> *King.* O happy day! O pleasing view!
> My Queen forgives—
> *Queen.* My lord is true.
> *King.* No more I'll change—
> *Queen.* No more I'll grieve;
> *Both.* But ever thus united live.

Sir Trusty here awakes from his slumber—he has drank of the same potion as Rosamond—and enters into a compact of peace and concord with his wife, Grideline:—

> *Grid.* I'll too my plighted vows renew,
> Since 'tis so courtly to be true.
> Since conjugal passion
> Is come into fashion,
> And marriage so blest on the throne is,
> Like a Venus I'll shine,
> Be fond and be fine,
> And Sir Trusty shall be my Adonis.

with which the great poet seems to have been much pleased. The praise of youth is always sweet in the ears of age. Dryden probably introduced his young admirer to Congreve, by whom he was presented to Charles Montagu, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and leader of the Whig party in the House of Commons. He also obtained from him a critical preface to the *Georgics*, and for this and other services repaid him, in the postscript to his translation of the *Æneid*, by some of those royal compliments which he knew how to pour out with such generous profusion.

In the same year (1693) Addison took his degree of M.A. For the next five years he pursued the even tenor of his way, amusing himself with the trifles of elegant scholarship, and occasionally cultivating his graceful but not very vigorous Muse. He had not decided upon a career. The Church was open to him, and perhaps in his own heart he looked forward with pleasure to the repose it afforded; but the influence of Charles Montagu prevailed to secure him for the public service. It was thought that he might do useful work as a diplomatist. But in those times a knowledge of French was indispensable to a diplomatist; and Addison was sent abroad to acquire it. The interest of the Lord Chancellor procured him a travelling pension of three hundred pounds a year—a good many of us would learn French for even a smaller annuity!—and in the summer of 1696, Addison crossed from Dover to Calais, and entered upon his Continental tour. He arrived at Blois in December, and stayed until the following July, studying the French language. The Abbé Philippeau, one of his associates, thus describes his mode of life:—'He would rise' (he says) 'as early as two and three in the height of summer, and lie a-bed till between eleven and twelve in the depth of winter. He was untalkative, and often thoughtful; sometimes so lost in thought, that I have gone into his room and stayed five minutes, be-

fore he has known anything of it. He had his masters, generally, at supper with him: kept very little company beside; and had no concern whilst here that I know of, and I think I should have known it if he had had any.'

He afterwards visited Lyons and Marseilles,[1] and thence passed into Italy. He admired the glories of Genoa; wondered at the Duomo of Milan; was caught in a storm along the shores of Lake Bonacus; and spent the merry season of the Carnival at Venice. On his way to Rome he looked in upon the little republic of San Marino. In the Eternal City his cultivated taste and poetic sympathies found abundant material for their exercise. Along the Appian Way he hastened to Naples, where he saw all that was most attractive to such a traveller; climbing Vesuvius, exploring the tunnel of Posilipo, and wandering among the vines and almond trees of Caprea. Thence he returned to Rome by sea, skirting the verdant shores which song and legend have invested with such beautiful associations. Towards the end of October he journeyed northward; and, by way of Sienna and Florence, struck the foot of the snow-capped Alps. Crossing Mont Cenis, he composed his *Letter to Lord Halifax*, as he playfully informs Mr Wortley Montagu in a brief communication from Geneva, dated December 9, 1701:—

'I am just now arrived,' he says, 'at Geneva by a very troublesome journey over the Alps, where I have been some days together shivering among the eternal snows. My head is still giddy with mountains and precipices, and you cannot imagine how much I am pleased with the sight of a plain, that is as agreeable to me at present as a shore was about a year ago after our tempest at Geneva. During my passage over the mountains I made a rhyming epistle to my Lord Halifax, which perhaps I will trouble you with the sight of, if I do not find it be nonsense upon a review. You will think it, I daresay, as extraordinary a thing to make a copy of verses in a voyage

[1] He was also at Paris, where he made the acquaintance of Boileau and Malebranche.

over the Alps as to write an heroic poem in a hackney coach, and I believe I am the first that ever thought of Parnassus on Mount Cenis.'

He extended his tour to Vienna, where in November he began his *Dialogue on Medals*. He was at Dresden in January, and at Hamburgh in March. Returning to Holland, he learned the news of his father's death; visited Leyden, the Hague, and Amsterdam; and in September crossed to England, where he was received by his friends with a cordial welcome, and at once elected into the Kit-Cat Club,—then supported by nearly all the wits and men of letters who professed Whig principles. A wide experience and an extensive knowledge of the world Addison must necessarily have acquired in his protracted Continental sojourn; but, apart from this, it left no impression on his literary work. His types of character, the scenes he depicts, the manners and customs he criticises with such delicate ridicule, are always English.

I have already alluded to the circumstances under which Addison composed his poem of *The Campaign*. Judged by its results, I should pronounce it the most successful ever written. Byron published *Childe Harold*, and awoke the next morning to find himself famous. Addison secured not only fame but fortune. He was at once appointed to a commissionership worth two hundred pounds a year, succeeding the celebrated Locke; and in the early part of 1706, as Under Secretary of State, accompanied Lord Halifax on a mission to the Electoral Prince of Hanover. At the general election of 1708 he was returned to the House of Commons as member for Lostwithiel, but his were not the qualities which raise men to distinction in the parliamentary arena. Having resigned his Under Secretaryship when his chief, Lord Sunderland, retired, he was appointed (in December 1708) Chief Secretary for Ireland under the Marquis of Wharton. The post was then an honourable, but not a very onerous one; but that it should have been filled by a man of letters, who

was without oratorical or administrative ability, is a fact which sharply accentuates the difference in the political situation between Addison's times and our own. Addison, however, was unquestionably a fortunate man,—one of those happy individuals to whom good luck comes as a matter of course—who, when Fortune showers down her favours, come in for the largest share of them without any effort of their own. Macaulay attributes his unexampled prosperity to his literary talents and the influence which he derived from his character. But his literary talents were not, as I have hinted, of the kind which 'tell' in political warfare. His political pamphlets and articles are dreary reading, and he could hardly have made a speech in public to save his life.[1] And as to 'the influence he derived from his character,' men don't rise to Chief Secretaryships because they keep the ten commandments. No doubt he owed much to his serenity of temper and fascination of address, and more to his friendship with the great Whig leaders; but when we have given due weight to these causes, we must still pronounce Addison's political preferment to be inexplicable.

He was in Ireland when his friend Steele started that happiest of literary projects, the *Tatler* (April 12, 1709), and at his friend's request Addison became a contributor to it. Unwittingly, Steele had opened up to him the very field best suited to his graceful and gracious genius; and he cultivated it with such success that he virtually made it his own. 'I fared,' says Steele, 'like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid. I was undone by my auxiliary. When I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him.' Addison's essays were something entirely new in English literature—new in their choice of subjects, their method of treatment, their felicity of expression. Their humour was of a kind

[1] I must admit, however, that in the Irish Parliament he seems to have spoken more than once; but, if so, he never gained the public ear.

to which the public had never before been accustomed—it was so delicate yet so keen, so refined and yet so genuine. As a master of light and airy ridicule, their author has never been surpassed. His wit, too, is of the finest quality in its combined polish and incisiveness; it cuts like a lancet. Lastly, 'as an observer of life, of manners, of all the shades of human character, he stands in the first class. And what he observed he had the art of communicating in two widely different ways. He could describe virtues, vices, habits, whims, as well as Clarendon. But he could do something better. He could call human beings into existence, and make them exhibit themselves. If we wish to find anything more vivid than Addison's best portraits, we must go either to Shakespeare or to Cervantes.'

In October 1710, Addison was elected for Malmesbury. The following year was disastrous to him, for he had sustained some severe pecuniary losses, and the accession of the Tories to power threw him out of his official employments. Writing to Mr Wortley he says (July 20, 1711),—'I have within this twelvemonth lost a place of two thousand pounds per annum, an estate in the Indies of fourteen thousand pounds, and what is worse than all the rest, my mistress. Hear this, and wonder at my philosophy. I find they are going to take away my Irish place' [Keeper of the Records] 'from me too; to which I must add, that I have just resigned my fellowship, and that stocks sink every day.'

In 1713 he was re-elected for Malmesbury. The death of Queen Anne in the following year accomplished a complete revolution in public affairs. The political wheel of fortune carried the Whigs once more to the top; a Whig Ministry came into power; and Addison again went to Dublin as Chief Secretary, where he renewed that friendly intercourse with Swift which political differences had for some time rendered impossible. In 1715 his salary as keeper of the Irish Records was raised to five hundred pounds a year, and he was appointed to a seat at the Board

of Trade. On the 2d of August 1716, he committed what seems to have been the great mistake of his life, and was married to the Dowager Countess of Warwick. It seems to have been, on Addison's part, a love-match. The Countess was a woman of great though mature beauty; the versifiers of the day were consummate flatterers, but if her personal charms had not been exceptional, they would not have dared to address her in such strains as the following. Flattery, if wholly undeserved, becomes an insult. The lines I am about to quote are ascribed to Tickell. After commenting on the immortality with which Homer has endowed the fair Helen of Troy, he exclaims:—

'Like fate thy lasting name shall bless
The poet, and the theme no less:
Thy matchless truth and form divine
Through many a circling age shall shine;
And future bards their flattered fair
To Venus or to thee compare.
Of right mayst thou the task impose,
To whom his boasted fame he owes.
Oft, as on Britain's crowded stage,
He ravished and reformed the age,
We thought each heroine, there designed,
The work of his inventive mind.
But now the secret we descry.
Ask, if he dare the theft deny;
From thee he copied Marcia's soul,
And Rosamunda's beauty stole. . . .
But why should I, in lowly lays,
Relate his known, his meanest praise?
Warwick! sole pleasure of his breast!
Like thee, was ever woman blest?
To whom in nuptial bands are joined
The greatest heart, the greatest mind;
From vice no less than error free,
And true to honour as to thee.
Just Heaven, that long with pleasure saw
How firm he kept to Virtue's law,
Thy beauty for his arms prepared,
And gives him now his full reward.'

Addison's married life, however, was not a happy one. The wits said that though Holland House (his new residence) was so large a mansion, it could not contain Mr Addison, the Countess of Warwick, and one guest—Peace. The Countess appears to have been a shrew and a termagant; and the unfortunate 'Spectator' was glad to withdraw himself from her ill-temper to the seclusion of a tavern, where over the walnuts and the wine he could discuss with a few friends his favourite authors. There is a tradition recorded in the *Addisonia*, that when at home he would retire to the picture-gallery at Holland House, now called the Long Room, 'to seek repose and the solace of strong waters.' It is said 'that he placed a bottle and a glass at each end of it, and so alternately exercised his lips and his legs.' He had other causes of vexation than the shrewishness of his wife. There was the enmity of Pope, provoked by the appearance of Tickell's version of the first book of the *Iliad*, which Addison had revised. Pope chose to imagine the existence of a conspiracy against his fame, of which Addison was the centre, and revenged himself by drawing the character of Atticus with a good deal of truth but more malignancy, and with all his over-exquisite sharpness of touch:—

'Were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires:
Blest with each talent, and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease;
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to blame, or to commend,
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;

Dreading even fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging, that he ne'er obliged:
Like Cato, gives his little senate laws,
And sits attentive to his own applause;
While wits and templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise.
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who could not weep, if Atticus were he?'

Addison was deeply wounded by this pungent satire; but with splendid generosity he inserted in the *Freeholder* a graceful and glowing eulogy upon Pope's *Iliad.*[1]

There was also the difference with Steele, who, not unnaturally, took umbrage at the neglect with which his claims were treated by the Whig leaders, and, more particularly, at the partiality shown to Tickell, a younger man and a vastly inferior writer, whom Addison had made Under Secretary of State. The rift was widened by the opposite sides which the two divided friends took on the bill for limiting the number of Peers; a bill unconstitutional in principle, and therefore justly attacked by Steele; but as emanating from the Whig Cabinet, accepted and defended by Addison. Who will not regret that Addi-

[1] Pope gives the following version of the quarrel:—'Philips seemed to have been encouraged to abuse me in coffee-houses and conversations: Gildon wrote a thing about Wycherley, in which he had abused both me and my relations very grossly. Lord Warwick himself told me one day "that it was in vain for me to endeavour to be well with Mr Addison; that his jealous temper would never admit of a settled friendship between us; and, to convince me of what he had said, assured me that Addison had encouraged Gildon to publish those scandals, and had given him ten guineas after they were published." The next day, while I was heated with what I had heard, I wrote a letter to Mr Addison to let him know "that I was not unacquainted with this behaviour of his; that if I was to speak severely of him in return for it, it should not be in such a dirty way; that I should rather tell him himself fairly of his faults, and allow his good qualities; and that it should be something in the following manner." I then subjoined the first sketch of what has since been called my satire on Addison. He used me very civilly ever after; and never did me any injustice that I knew of, from that time to his death, which was about three years after'—(*Spence*).

son's premature death prevented that reconciliation which otherwise both he and Steele would assuredly have endeavoured to bring about?

On the 12th of April 1717, Addison was appointed Secretary of State (in the Sunderland Ministry)—the highest official dignity ever held in England by a man of letters. He had scarcely gained this crowning honour of a meritorious life before his health began to give way. From one serious attack he recovered in the autumn; but, a relapse took place, and in the following spring, a severe asthmatic disorder compelled him to resign the seals (March 14th). His public services were acknowledged by a pension of sixteen hundred pounds per annum, charged upon the revenues of Ireland. Relieved from the cares of office, he seemed to recover his health, and began to meditate upon several literary projects—a tragedy on the Death of Socrates, a translation of the Psalms, and a treatise on the Evidences of Christianity; but his disease returned upon him, complicated with dropsy, and in the early months of 1719 made rapid progress. He met his end with fortitude, and in his whole life, serene and pure as it was, nothing became him better than the devout composure of his latter days. He saw his friend Gay, and obtained his forgiveness for some undescribed injury of which Gay himself apparently knew nothing; and summoned to his bedside his son-in-law, Lord Warwick. 'He came,' says Dr Young, 'but life was flickering in the socket'; the dying friend was silent; after a decent and proper pause, the youth said, 'Dear sir, you sent for me; I believe, I hope, that you have some commands; I shall hold them most sacred.' Forcibly grasping the young man's hand, he softly said, 'See in what peace a Christian can die!' He spoke with difficulty, and soon expired—on the 17th of June, at the early age of forty-eight.

Sir Richard Steele.

With the name of Addison every student of English literature associates that of Steele as readily as he links together Lamb and Coleridge, or Southey and Wordsworth, or Johnson and Boswell. They were not only contemporaries, but intimate friends, and not only intimate friends but fellow-workers, whose joint influence greatly raised the moral tone of English society. They were such close friends and harmonious fellow-workers, perhaps, because they were so unlike in character and conduct; for it is not always true—at least so far as mankind is concerned—that birds of a feather flock together. I have observed that the strongest friendships exist between opposites. Steele was a far inferior man to his friend Addison, from the moralist's point of view; but I think he was much more lovable. Addison, as we have seen, moved through life with a serenity almost as cold and calm as that of his favourite hero, Marlborough. He paid his bills; he dressed with becoming care; and if he drank more wine than was necessary, he drank in good company, and could always walk home to bed. Steele was an ardent, impulsive fellow—sanguine, good-tempered, generous; but dreadfully disregardful of the *convenances;* always in debt, and frequently skulking out of the way of sheriff-officers; fond of his liquor, but unable to carry it decently. An anecdote is told by Dr Hoadley, which throws more light on the character of the man than a page of description would do. Thus it runs:—'My father, when Bishop of Bangor, was, by invitation, present at one of the Whig meetings, held at the "Trumpet," in Shire Lane, when Sir Richard, in his zeal, rather exposed himself, having the double duty of the day upon him, as well to celebrate the immortal memory of King William, it being the 4th November, as to drink his friend Addison

up to conversation pitch, whose phlegmatic constitution was hardly warmed for society by that time. Steele was not fit for it. Two remarkable circumstances happened. John Sly, the hatter of facetious memory, was in the house ; and John, pretty mellow, took it into his head to come into the company on his knees, with a tankard of ale in his hand to drink off to the *immortal memory*, and to return in the same manner. Steele, sitting next my father, whispered him—"*Do laugh. It is humanity to laugh*" —a speech for which one would forgive Steele worse errors than any he really committed. 'Sir Richard, in the evening, being too much in the same condition, was put into a chair, and sent home. Nothing would serve him but being carried to the Bishop of Bangor's, late as it was. However, the chairmen carried him home, and got him upstairs, when his great complaisance would wait on them downstairs, which he did, and then was got quietly to bed. No doubt next morning he was very penitent, and accepted the Bishop's reproaches—if he made any—with an air of the most candid contrition !'

Addison had the advantage of his friend in personal appearance. All his contemporaries agree in describing him as strikingly handsome, with well-cut features, and the mien and manners of a high-bred gentleman. Of Steele we possess a portrait, drawn, it is true, by no friendly hand, but known to be sufficiently honest, which exhibits a remarkable contrast.

'Sir John Edgar,' says Dennis, 'is of a middle stature, broad shoulders, thick legs, a shape like the picture of somebody over a farmer's chimney—a short chin, a short nose, a short forehead, a broad flat face, and a dusky countenance. Yet with such a face and such a shape, he discovered at sixty that he took himself for a beauty, and appeared to be more mortified at being told that he was ugly, than he was by any reflection made upon his honour or understanding.

'He is a gentleman born, witness himself, of very honourable family ; certainly of a very ancient one, for his ancestors flourished in

Tipperary long before the English ever set foot in Ireland. He has testimony of this more authentic than the Herald's Office or any human testimony. For God has marked him more abundantly than he did Cain, and stamped his native country on his face, his understanding, his writings, his actions, his passions, and, above all, his vanity. The Hibernian brogue is still upon all these, though long habit and length of days have worn it off his tongue.'

The two friends were sincere believers in the Christian religion, but here again their difference of temperament and character was conspicuous enough. Addison wore his religion as he wore his clothes, with a tranquil and assured air—with a certain self-consciousness which in a meaner man would hardly be admired. On his death-bed we have seen him summon that graceless son-in-law of his to see how a Christian could die—throughout his life he was demanding of all men that they should see how a Christian could live. We do not mean that he was insincere; but he liked everybody to admire his sincerity. Poor Steele! he was never very sure about *his* religion! He could believe and love and hope; but he knew that he did not live up to his faith, and as he was always sinning, so was he always repenting. Not that his sins were very grave; he lived beyond his means—but then those means were never very large; and he drank too much—but then his warmth of constitution brought him easily under the influence of wine. He was not vicious, but he was a man of many failings—though his failings more engage our affections than the almost absolute flawlessness of Addison. For this careless, impetuous, extravagant fellow had a heart capable of the most generous emotions, of the tenderest affections; he was a true friend and a devoted husband; he was an eager and active philanthropist, and, unlike too many philanthropists, a liberal giver; he could never see poverty or distress without wanting to relieve it; the wounded stranger by the wayside always found in him the true Samaritan,

ready with his kind words and practical help, his bandages and his liniment, and, at times, his twopence.

Addison did not care for children, and had but scant respect for women; Steele loved both. I think he was the first man to give childhood and children a definite place in literature. He delighted in their innocent prattle, in their little sportive ways; studied them with an affectionate seriousness, and discoursed about them in print with a fulness and a fidelity which shows how real was his love for them. In one of his *Tatlers* occurs an exquisite picture, the like of which no man in his time could or would have painted. I cannot resist the temptation of placing it before the reader:—

On a sudden we were alarmed with the noise of a drum, and immediately entered my little godson to give me a point of war. His mother, between laughing and chiding, would have put him out of the room; but I would not part with him so. I found, upon conversation with him, though he was a little noisy in his mirth, that the child had excellent parts, and was a great master of all the learning on the other side of eight years old. I perceived him a very great historian in *Æsop's Fables;* but he frankly declared to me his mind, 'that he did not delight in that learning, because he did not believe they were true;' for which reason I found he had very much turned his studies, for about a twelvemonth past, into the lives of Don Bellianis of Greece, Guy of Warwick, *The Seven Champions*, and other historians of that age. I could not but observe the satisfaction the father took in the forwardness of his son, and that these diversions might turn to some profit. I found the boy had made remarks which might be of service to him during the course of his whole life. He would tell you the mismanagement of John Hickerthrift, find fault with the passionate temper in Bevis of Southampton, and loved St George for being the champion of England; and by this means had his thoughts insensibly moulded into the notions of discretion, virtue, and honour. I was extolling his accomplishments, when his mother told me 'that the little girl who led me in this morning was, in her way, a better scholar than he. Betty,' said she, 'deals chiefly in fairies and sprights; and sometimes in a winter night will terrify the maids with her accounts, until they are afraid to go up to bed.'

Then, again, as to woman: Steele may claim to have been the first English writer who did full and free justice to the claims, the rights, the virtues of the sex. He speaks of her always with chivalrous respect; extols her as wife and mother; recognises the value of her influence; champions her with all the sincerity of a frank and generous nature. Though it was Congreve and not Steele who said of a certain celebrated lady that, 'to behold her was an immediate check to loose behaviour, and to have loved her was a liberal education,' yet the spirit which breathes in this remark inspires all Steele's allusions to woman. Look at the heroines of his comedies: how pure, and true, and sensible they are; and compare them with the brilliant demireps who flaunt through the dramas of Congreve or Farquhar. He makes his heroes treat them with the regard and admiration he feels for them himself. His conception of the manner in which a true gentleman should behave towards the woman he loves is developed in Bevil's courtship of Indiana in 'The Conscious Lovers.' Contrast it, if you please, with Mirabel's treatment of Oriana in Farquhar's 'The Inconstant.' Or take the two dramatists' views of marriage. Farquhar makes Mirabel say, 'What a dangerous precipice have I 'scaped! Was not I just now upon the brink of destruction? Oh, my friend let me run into thy bosom! as lark, escaped from the devouring pinners of a hawk, quakes with more dismal apprehension.' His friend interrupts—'The matter, man?' Mirabel replies, with exquisite wit, 'Marriage! hanging! I was just at the gallows foot, the marriage noose about my neck, and the cart wheeling from me. Oh, I sha'n't be myself this month again.' [*Exeunt.*]

I have quoted Steele's delightful portrait of a child: from the same essay I take his ideal sketch of a wife and mother. In the literature of the period it is, I believe, perfectly unique. Bickerstaff is describing a visit made to an old friend who was formerly his schoolfellow:—

He came to town last week, with his family, for the winter: and yesterday morning sent me word his wife expected me to dinner. I am, as it were, at home at that house, and every member of it knows me for their well-wisher. I cannot, indeed, express the pleasure it is to be met by the children with so much joy as I am when I go thither. The boys and girls strive who shall come first, when they think it is I that am knocking at the door; and that child which loses the run to me runs back again to tell the father it is Mr Bickerstaff. This day I was led in by a pretty girl that we all thought must have forgot me; for the family has been out of town these two years. Her knowing me again was a mighty subject with us, and took up our discourse at the first entrance; after which, they began to rally me upon a thousand little stories they heard in the country about my marriage to one of my neighbour's daughters; upon which, the gentleman, my friend said,—'Nay, if Mr Bickerstaff marries a child of any of his old companions, I hope mine shall have the preference; there is Mrs Mary is now sixteen, and would make him as fine a widow as the best of them. But I know him too well; he is so enamoured with the very memory of those who flourished in our youth, that he will not so much as look upon the modern beauties. I remember, old gentleman, how often you went home in a day to refresh your countenance and dress when Teraminta reigned in your heart. As we came up in the coach, I repeated to my wife some of your verses on her.' With such reflections on little passages which happened long ago, we passed our time during a cheerful and elegant meal. After dinner, his lady left the room, as did also the children. As soon as we were alone, he took me by the hand:—'Well, my good friend,' says he, 'I am heartily glad to see thee; I was afraid you would never have seen all the company that dined with you to-day again. Do not you think the good woman of the house a little altered since you followed her from the playhouse to find out who she was for me?' I perceived a tear fall down his cheek as he spoke, which moved me not a little. But, to turn the discourse, I said,—'She is not, indeed, that creature she was when she returned me the letter I carried from you, and told me, "She hoped, as I was a gentleman, I would be employed no more to trouble her, who had never offended me, but would be so much the gentleman's friend as to dissuade him from a pursuit which he could never succeed in." You may remember I thought her in earnest, and you were forced to employ your cousin Will, who made his sister get acquainted with her for you. You cannot expect her to be for ever fifteen.' 'Fifteen!' replied my good friend. 'Ah! you little understand—you, that have lived a bachelor—how great, how exquisite a pleasure there is in

being really beloved! It is impossible that the most beauteous face in nature should raise in me such pleasing ideas as when I look upon that excellent woman. That fading in her countenance is chiefly caused by her watching with me in my fever. This was followed by a fit of sickness, which had like to have carried me off last winter. I tell you sincerely, I have so many obligations to her that I cannot, with any sort of moderation, think of her present state of health. But, as to what you say of fifteen, she gives me every day pleasure beyond what I ever knew in the possession of her beauty when I was in the vigour of youth. Every moment of her life brings me fresh instances of her complacency to my inclinations, and her prudence in regard to my fortune. Her face is to me much more beautiful than when I first saw it; there is no decay in any feature which I cannot trace from the very instant it was occasioned by some anxious concern for my welfare and interests. Thus, at the same time, methinks the love I conceived towards her for what she was, is heightened by my gratitude for what she is. The love of a wife is as much above the idle passion commonly called by that name, as the loud laughter of buffoons is inferior to the elegant mirth of gentlemen. Oh! she is an inestimable jewel! In her examination of her household affairs, she shows a certain fearfulness to find a fault, which makes her servants obey her like children; and the meanest we have has an ingenuous shame for an offence not always to be seen in children in other families. I speak freely to you, my old friend; ever since her sickness, things that gave me the quickest joy before turn now to a certain anxiety. As the children play in the next room, I know the poor things by their steps, and am considering what they must do should they lose their mother in their tender years. The pleasure I used to take in telling my boy stories of battles, and asking my girl questions about the disposal of her baby, and the gossiping of it, is turned into inward reflection and melancholy.'

He would have gone on in this tender way, when the good lady entered, and with an inexpressible sweetness in her countenance told us 'she had been searching her closet for something very good to treat such an old friend as I was.' Her husband's eyes sparkled with pleasure at the cheerfulness of her countenance; and I saw all his fears vanish in an instant. The lady, observing something in our looks which showed we had been more serious than ordinary, and seeing her husband receive her with great concern under a forced cheerfulness, immediately guessed at what we had been talking of, and applying herself to me, said, with a smile, 'Mr Bickerstaff, do not believe a word of what he tells you; I shall still live to have you for my second, as I have often promised you, unless he takes more

care of himself than he has done since his coming to town. You must know he tells me that he finds London is a much more healthy place ; for he sees several of his old acquaintances and school-fellows are here—young fellows with fair, full-bottomed periwigs. I could scarcely keep him this morning from going out open-breasted.' My friend, who is always extremely delighted with her agreeable humour, made her sit down with us. She did it with that easiness which is peculiar to women of sense ; and to keep up the good humour she had brought in with her, turned her raillery upon me. 'Mr Bickerstaff, you remember you followed me one night from the playhouse ; suppose you should carry me thither to-morrow night, and lead me in the front box.' This put us into a long field of discourse about the beauties who were the mothers to the present, and shined in the boxes twenty years ago. I told her 'I was glad she had transferred so many of her charms, and I did not question but her eldest daughter was within half-a-year of being a toast.' . . .

I sat with them until it was very late, sometimes in merry, sometimes in serious discourse, with this particular pleasure which gives the only true relish to all conversation, a sense that everyone of us liked each other. I went home considering the different conditions of a married life and that of a bachelor, and I must confess it struck me with a secret concern to reflect that, whenever I go off, I shall leave no traces behind me. In this pensive mood I return to my family ; that is to say, to my maid, my dog, my cat, who only can be the better or worse for what happens to me.

Who does not see that the author of so tenderly beautiful a passage must have had a profound sympathy with the sweet domesticities of wedded life and the hallowed mysteries of conjugal affection ? I repeat that in all the literature of the period I know no more attractive home-picture—no more vivid realisation of the anxious love of the husband and the loving abnegation of a true wife. You must go back to the *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson* to find an appropriate companion to it.

We are not surprised to find that the man who could write like this was an affectionate husband. 'How often,' he says, in dedicating to his wife one of his works, 'how often has your tenderness removed pain from my sick head, how often anguish from my afflicted

heart! If there are such beings as guardian angels, they are thus employed. I cannot believe one of them to be more good in inclination, or more charming in form than my wife.' This was addressed to his second wife, Mistress or Miss Mary Scurlock, who commands the regard and respect of every lover of literature for the care with which she preserved all her husband's letters to her—letters, notes, notelets—some four hundred in all—written under a strange variety of circumstances, and as a whole presenting a very vivid and faithful view of Steele's household affairs. Some are written under the influence of the evening's cheerful glass; some bear the seriousness of the next morning's headache; some are dated from tavern and coffee-house; others from the lock-up where he is expiating his invincible carelessness in money matters. Some are mere scraps of paper with a few business details; others are the more prolonged expressions of tender confidence. But all bear witness to this heedless, generous, impulsive, over-sanguine, thriftless man's pure, devoted tenderness to his wife, bear witness to the manly fidelity of that loving heart. The biographer is sometimes severe in his allusions to Lady Steele—to her excessive prudence and her rigid marital philosophy,—but there must have been a reserve of admirable qualities in the woman who inspired Sir Richard with so deep and constant an affection. I select two or three of his pre-nuptial letters. The first is dated August 30, 1707,—seven or eight days before their marriage.

MADAM,—I beg pardon that my paper is not finer, but I am forced to write from a coffee-house, where I am attending about business. There is a dirty crowd of busy faces all around me, talking of money; while all my ambition, all my wealth, is love! Love which animates my heart, sweetens my humour, enlarges my soul, and affects every action of my life. It is to my lovely charmer I owe, that many noble ideas are continually affixed to my words and actions; it is the natural effect of that generous passion to create in the admirer some similitude of the object admired. Then, my dear,

am I every day to improve from so sweet a companion. Look up, my fair one, to that Heaven which made thee such; and join with me to implore its influence on our tender innocent hours, and beseech the Author of love to bless the rites He has ordained—and mingle with our happiness a just sense of our transient condition, and a resignation to His will, which only can regulate our minds to a steady endeavour to please Him and each other.—I am for ever your faithful servant, RICH. STEELE.

A few hours afterwards, warm with wine, the ardent lover writes in a different strain :—

DEAR, LOVELY MISTRESS SCURLOCK,—I have been in very good company, where your health, under the character of *the woman I loved best*, has been often drunk; so that I may say that I am dead drunk for your sake, which is more than *I die for you*.

RICH. STEELE.

Two days later he writes with pleasant exaggeration :—

MADAM,—It is the hardest thing in the world to be in love, and yet attend business. As for me, all who speak to me find me out, and I must lock myself up, or other people will do it for me.

A gentleman asked me this morning, 'What news from Lisbon?' and I answered, 'She is exquisitely handsome.' Another desired to know 'when I had last been at Hampton Court?' I replied, 'It will be on Tuesday come se'nnight.' Prythee allow me at least to kiss your hand before that day, that my mind may be in some composure. O love!

A thousand torments dwell about thee,
Yet who could live, to live without thee?

Methinks I could write a volume to you; but all the language on earth would fail in saying how much, and with what disinterested passion, I am ever yours, RICH. STEELE.

After marriage, the tone is not less loving, but the burden of the letters is very different, as for example :—

December 22, 1707.

MY DEAR, DEAR WIFE,—I write to let you know I do not come home to dinner, being obliged to attend some business abroad, of which I shall give you an account (when I see you in the evening), as becomes your dutiful and obedient husband.

The next is dated from 'The Devil Tavern, Temple Bar, January 3, 1707-8.'

DEAR PRUE,—I have partly succeeded in my business to-day, and inclose two guineas as earnest of more. Dear Prue, I cannot come home to dinner. I languish for your welfare, and will never be a moment careless more.

January, 14, 1707-8.

DEAR WIFE,—Mr Edgecombe, Ned Ask, and Mr Lumley have desired me to sit an hour with them at the 'George,' in Pall Mall, for which I desire your patience till twelve o'clock, and that you will go to bed.

A glimpse of pecuniary straits:—

Gray's Inn, February 3, 1708.

DEAR PRUE,—If the man who has my shoemaker's bill calls, let him be answered that I shall call on him as I come home. I stay here in order to get Jonson to discount a bill for me, and shall dine with him for that end. He is expected at home every minute.—Your most humble, obedient servant, etc.

Tennis-court Coffee House, May 5, 1709.

DEAR WIFE,—I hope I have this day done what will be pleasing to you; in the meantime shall lie this night at a baker's, one Leg, over against the 'Devil Tavern,' at Charing Cross. I shall be able to confront the fools who wish me uneasy, and shall have the satisfaction to see thee cheerful and at ease.

If the printer's boy be at house, send him hither; and let Mrs Todd send by the boy my night-gown, slippers, and clean linen. You shall hear from me early in the morning.

Of his later letters, when he was Sir Richard and his wife Lady Steele, two or three specimens must be given:—

Hampton Count, March 16, 1716-17.

DEAR PRUE,—If you have written anything to me which I should have received last night, I beg your pardon that I cannot answer till the next post. . . . Your son at the present writing is mighty well employed in tumbling on the floor of the room and sweeping the sand with a feather. He grows a most delightful child, and very full of play and spirit. He is also a very great scholar; he can read his primer; and I have brought down my Virgil. He makes most shrewd

remarks about the pictures. We are very intimate friends and playfellows. He begins to be very ragged; and I hope I shall be pardoned if I equip him with new clothes and frocks; or what Mrs Evans and I shall think for his service.

[*Undated.*]

You tell me you want a little flattery from me. I assure you I know no one who deserves so much commendation as yourself, and to whom saying the best things would be so little like flattery. The thing speaks for itself, considering you as a very handsome woman that loves retirement—one who does not want wit, and yet is extremely sincere; and so I could go through all the vices which attend the good qualities of other people, of [from] which you are exempt. But, indeed, though you have every perfection, you have an extravagant fault, which almost frustrates the good in you to me, and that is, that you do not love to dress, to appear, to shine out, even at my request, and to make me proud of you, or rather to indulge the pride I have that you are mine. . . .—Your most affectionate obsequious husband, RICHARD STEELE.

March 26, 1717.

MY DEAREST PRUE,—I have received yours, wherein you give me the sensible affliction of telling me more of the continual pain in your head. . . . When I lay in your place, and on your pillow, I assure you I fell into tears last night, to think that my charming little insolent might be then awake and in pain; and took it to be a sin to go to sleep.

For this tender passion towards you, I must be contented that your Prueship will condescend to call yourself my well-wisher.

Steele was not only a tender husband and a loving father, but a loyal friend. To Addison he clung from his boyhood with a touching fidelity of affection, which was not even for a moment disturbed when Addison, to repay himself a loan he had made, sold all Steele's furniture and deprived him of a home. Gay, Budgell, Tickell, Prior,—all had proofs of his genial sincerity. As a boon companion he was unrivalled,—his animal spirits were so great—there was such a cordiality in his good humour—such a freedom in his generosity—his conversation was so lively and so various. It was none the worse for being

relieved by those airy projects of his, which never came to anything—those beautiful Aladdin palaces which were never finished, and rested upon no foundation. It was none the worse that it dealt so much with men and manners, of which Steele knew a good deal more than he did of books. It was none the worse, but all the better, for that good-heartedness in which he never failed, that broad and true sympathy which he so strongly cherished with whatsoever was true, pure, lovely, and of good report.

'He was liked in all company,' says Thackeray, 'because he liked *it*, and you liked to see his enjoyment as you like to see the glee of a boxful of children at the pantomime. He was not one of those lonely ones of the earth whose greatness obliged them to be solitary; on the contrary, he admired, I think, more than any man who ever wrote; and full of hearty applause and sympathy, wins upon you by calling you to share his delight and good humour. His laugh rings through the whole house. He must have been invaluable at a tragedy, and have cried as much as the most tender young lady in the house. He has a relish for beauty and goodness whenever he meets it. He admired Shakespeare affectionately, and more than any man of his time: and according to his generous, expansive nature, called upon all his company to like what he liked himself. He did not damn with faint praise: he was in the world and of it; and his enjoyment of life presents the strangest contrast to Swift's savage indignation and Addison's lonely serenity.'

Such was Steele the man: we have now to speak of Steele the writer. What strikes us first in his writing is its spontaneity. He wrote because he had something to say, and could not help saying it. He had seen much, and reflected much, though he had read little; and there were few subjects to the discussion of which he could not contribute something valuable from his stores of thought or observation. His exceeding naturalness is a characteristic remarked by Thackeray; but at least as conspicuous is his sympathetic temper. He does not look upon his fellow-creatures with the austere gaze of the philosopher;

but with the kindly eyes of a friendly onlooker, who knows that he is one of themselves, and not wholly free from the failings and foibles which he so good-naturedly chastises. It is no whip of scorpions that 'Sir Richard' handles; the lash is of silk, and the touch light though smart. Next let us note his variety; he ranges from grave to gay, from lively to severe; tells a story admirably, criticises acutely and delicately, and as a humoristic censor of social follies, is very little inferior to Addison himself. It must never be forgotten that he laid open the path in which his friend trod with so assured a step; that he drew the outlines of those *dramatis personæ* of the *Spectator* which Addison afterwards filled up with his exquisite touches. How excellent he was as a *raconteur*, let his story of *Inkle and Yarico* bear witness. And surely it is to be regretted that the author of this charming fiction never wrote a novel—a novel of English society, of so many phases of which he was such a close and happy observer! Steele's vivacity is another quality that claims our consideration. He writes with a sprightliness, an ease, an unforced gaiety which carries his reader completely along with him. Take his pleasant comments on the agreeableness of being flattered, and observe how brightly he insinuates his moral:—

'We gentlemen of small fortunes,' he says, 'are extremely necessitous in this particular. I have indeed one who smokes with me often; but his parts are so low, that all the incense he does me is to fill his pipe with me, and to be out at just as many whiffs as I take. This is all the praise or assent that he is capable of, yet there are more hours when I would rather be in his company than that of the brightest man I know. It would be a hard matter to give an account of this inclination to be flattered; but if we go to the bottom of it we shall find that the pleasure in it is something like that of receiving money which lay out. Every man thinks he has an estate of reputation, and is glad to see one that will bring any of it home to him; it is no matter how dirty a bag it is conveyed to him in, or by how

clownish a messenger, so the money is good. All that we want to be pleased with flattery is to believe that the man is sincere who gives it us. It is by this one accident that absurd creatures often outrun the most skilful in this art. Their want of ability is here an advantage, and their bluntness, as it is the seeming effect of sincerity, is the best cover to artifice.

'It is, indeed, the greatest to injuries to flatter any but the unhappy, or such as are displeased with themselves for some infirmity. In this latter case we have a member of our club, that, when Sir Jeffrey falls asleep, wakens him with snoring. This makes Sir Jeffrey hold up for some moments the longer, to see there are men younger than himself among us, who are more lethargic than he is.'

Another example of this facile liveliness is before us in his amusing paper on quack advertisements:—

There is hardly a man in the world, one would think, so ignorant as not to know that the ordinary quack-doctors, who publish their abilities in little brown billets, distributed to all who pass by, are to a man impostors and murderers; yet such is the credulity of the vulgar, and the impudence of these professors, that the affair still goes on, and new promises of what was never done before are made every day. What aggravates the jest is that even this promise has been made as long as the memory of man can trace it, and yet nothing performed, and yet still prevails. . . .

'The doctor is lately come from his travels, and has practised both by sea and land, and therefore cures the green sickness, long sea voyages, and campaigns.' Both by sea and land! I will not answer for the distempers called 'sea voyages and campaigns,' but I daresay that of green sickness might be as well taken care of if the doctor stayed ashore. But the art of managing mankind is only to make them stare a little to keep up their astonishment; to let nothing be familiar to them, but ever to have something in their sleeve, in which they must think you are deeper than they are. There is an ingenious fellow, a barber of my acquaintance, who, besides his broken fiddle and a dried sea-monster, has a twine-cord, strained with two nails at each end, over his window, and the words 'rainy, dry, wet,' and so forth, written to denote the weather, according to the rising or falling of the cord. We very great scholars are not apt to wonder at this; but I observed a very honest fellow, a chance customer, who sat in the chair before me to be shaved, fix his eye upon this miraculous performance during the operation upon his chin and face. When these and his head also were cleared of all incumbrances and

excrescences, he looked at the fish, then at the fiddle, still grubbing in his pockets, and casting his eye again at the twine, and the words writ on each side; then altered his mind as to farthings, and gave my friend a silver sixpence. The business, as I said, is to keep up the amazement; and if my friend had only the skeleton and kit, he must have been contented with a less payment.

There is a doctor in Mouse Alley, near Wapping, who sets up for curing cataracts upon the credit of having, as his bill sets forth, lost an eye in the Emperor's service. His patients come in upon this, and he shows his muster-roll, which confirms that he was in his Imperial Majesty's troops; and he puts out their eyes with great success. Who would believe that a man should be a doctor for the cure of brusten children, by declaring that his father and grandfather were born brusten? But Charles Ingoltson, next door to the Harp in Barbican, has made a pretty penny by that asseveration. The generality go upon their first conception, and think no further; all the rest is granted. They take it that there is something uncommon in you, and give you credit for the rest. You may be sure it is upon that I go when sometimes, let it be to the purpose or not, I keep a Latin sentence in my front [an allusion to the Latin mottoes prefixed to the different papers, and always, by the way, very felicitously chosen]; and I was not a little pleased when I observed one of my readers say, casting his eye on my twentieth paper, 'More Latin still? What a prodigious scholar is this man!' But as I have here taken much liberty with this learned doctor, I must make up all I have said by repeating what he seems to be earnest in, and honestly promise to those who will not receive him as a great man, to wit, 'That from eight to twelve, and from two to six, he attends for the good of the public to bleed for threepence.'

This is pleasant reading; bright, and diverting, and enjoyable, yet with an under current of common sense, which relieves it from the imputation of being, like so much of the comic writing of to-day, extravagantly trivial. I look upon Steele as one of our greatest humorists, not so polished as Addison, but more genial; manly in his good temper and frankness; quick at seizing and apt at describing the salient points of exceptional characters, and the odd sides of things. But he is not less a master of pathos —of a pathos as unstrained and natural as his humour; distinguished by a deep sensibility, and an earnestness

which communicates itself to the reader. The only specimen for which we have room is the short but touching episode of Unnion and Valentine :—

At the siege of Namur by the Allies, there were in the ranks of the company commanded by Captain Pincout, in Colonel Frederick Hamilton's regiment, one Unnion, a corporal, and one Valentine, a private sentinel ; there happened between these two men a dispute about a matter of love, which, upon some aggravations, grew to an irreconcilable hatred. Unnion being the officer of Valentine, took all opportunities even to strike his rival, and profess the spite and revenge which moved him to it. The sentinel bore it without resistance, but frequently said he would die to be revenged of that tyrant. They had spent whole months thus, one injuring, the other complaining ; when in the midst of this rage towards each other, they were commanded upon the attack of the castle, where the corporal received a shot in the thigh, and fell ; the French pressing on ; and he, expecting to be trampled to death, called out to his enemy,—'Ah, Valentine, can you leave me here?' Valentine immediately ran back, and in the midst of a thick fire of the French, took the corporal upon his back, and brought him through all that danger, as far as the Abbey of Salsine, where a cannon ball took off his head : his body fell under his enemy whom he was carrying off. Unnion immediately forgot his wound, rose up, tearing his hair, and then threw himself upon the bleeding carcase, crying,—'Ah, Valentine, was it for me who have so barbarously used you, that thou hast died? I will not live after thee!' He was not by any means to be forced from the body, but was removed with it bleeding in his arms, and attended with tears by all their comrades who knew their enmity. When he was brought to a tent his wounds were dressed by force ; but the next day, still calling upon Valentine, and lamenting his cruelties to him, he died in the pangs of remorse and despair.

At times he adopts a tone of lofty reflection and devout aspiration, not unworthy of the author of *The Christian Hero.* Its sincerity cannot be doubted, though it may seem inconsistent with some of the foibles and failings of his life.

On the 12th of March 1671-2, was baptised under his father's Christian name, the new-born son of Richard Steele, a respectable Dublin solicitor, who at one time held the post of secretary to the first Duke of Ormond,

Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. The elder Steele died in 1677;[1] but his son was not forgotten by the Duke of Ormond, and in his thirteenth year, through the Duke's nomination, was received as a foundation boy at the Charterhouse. There he met with Addison, a boy of nearly his own age, with whom he formed a close and enduring intimacy, spending his vacations under the roof of Addison's father, the Deanery, Lichfield. Addison left the Charterhouse for Oxford in 1687; Steele did not leave until March 1690, when he matriculated at Christ Church, his friend being then a Demy at Magdalene. In August 1691 we find his name at the head of the postmasters (*portionistæ*) of Merton; but it is tolerably clear that he did little work at the University, and he left it without taking a degree. However he wrote a comedy there, which, with a sublime self-sacrifice, he burned by the advice of a friend.

Seized with a sudden passion for a soldier's life, he threw aside cap and gown—which cost him, he says, 'the

[1] In his later life, Steele referred with deep feeling to his father's premature death:—'The first sense of sorrow I ever knew,' he says, 'was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant, than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling "Papa," for I know not how I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother catched me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embrace, and told me, in a flood of tears, papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he would never come to us again. She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport which methought struck me with an instinct of sorrow, which, before I was sensible what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo, and receives impressions so forcible that they are as hard to be removed by reason as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application.'

succession to a very good estate in the county of Wexford in Ireland,'—and donned the plumed hat and richly-laced scarlet coat of the (third) Duke of Ormond's troop of cavalry. This must have been before 1695, for in March of that year he published a poem, *The Procession*, on Queen Mary's funeral (March 5, 1695), in the preface to which he describes himself as 'a gentleman of the army.' He dedicated his verses—they comprise about one hundred and fifty lines, of which the best is

'Pleasure itself has something that's severe'—

to the gallant soldier, John Lord Cutts, who had recently been appointed Colonel of the Coldstream Guards. He took the young soldier-poet into his household, and employed him as his secretary or agent. Afterwards he gave him an ensigncy in his own regiment, and finally obtained for him a captaincy in the Fusileers. Steele was thus brought into close contact with a gay and roystering company, among whom his good nature and animal spirits made him a great favourite,—at times, perhaps, a butt. There was, however, a strong reserve of religious feeling and solid sense in Steele. He continually struggled against his own inclinations, always setting before himself that ideal of a pure and noble life, which he so unfeignedly admired and so imperfectly realised; and it was perhaps as a means of strengthening his virtuous resolutions, and in order to give a permanent form to his loftier views and broader sympathies, that he composed his manual of *The Christian Hero; or, An Argument proving that no Principles but those of Religion are sufficient to make a Great Man.* He tells us that he wrote it for his private use; 'with a desire principally to fix upon his own mind a strong impression of Virtue and Religion, in opposition to a stronger propensity towards unwarrantable pleasures'; but in April 1701, he was generous enough to issue it for the benefit of his fellow-soldiers,

who, however, refused to profit by it, and from thinking its author, 'no undelightful companion,' soon came to reckon him 'a disagreeable fellow.' What was worse, they compared his conduct with his declared principles; measuring 'the least levity in his words and actions with the character of a Christian Hero'; and compelling him to defend them with the sword. It is said that he was consulted by a young comrade who was on the point of sending a challenge, and by his remonstrances and arguments dissuaded him from going on with it. But some of his ill companions afterwards so inclined him against his adviser, who was then recovering from a fever, that he insisted upon challenging *him*. Steele sought by all possible means to placate the angry young soldier, and when he failed, hoped, by his skill in fence to disarm without hurting him. Unfortunately, an unguarded thrust inflicted on the young man a dangerous, though not a mortal wound. Thenceforward Steele became a consistent and determined opponent of those 'affairs of honour,' which in the eighteenth century exacted so many victims.

Meanwhile, Steele's school and college friend, excellent Mr Joseph Addison, had completed his continental tour, had returned to England, and was residing in humble lodgings in the Haymarket. The contrast between the two was at this time all in favour of Captain Richard Steele.

'Could not some painter,' says Thackeray, in a characteristic passage, 'give us an interview between the gallant captain of Lucas's with his hat cocked, and his lace, and his face too, a little tarnished with drink, and that poet, that philosopher, pale, proud, and poor, his friend and monitor of school-days—of all days? How Dick must have bragged about his chances and his hopes, and the fine company he kept, and the charms of the reigning toasts and popular actresses; and the number of bottles that he and my lord, and some other pretty fellows had cracked overnight at the "Devil," or the "Garter"? Cannot one fancy Joseph Addison's calm smile and cold grey eyes following Dick for an instant, as he struts down the Mall to dine with the Guard at St James's, before he turns, with his

sober face and threadbare suit, to walk back to his lodgings up the two pair of stairs?'

To redeem his character as a man of wit and ability, which the publication of *The Christian Hero* had considerably damaged, Steele appeared before the public as a dramatist. His comedy—in spirit and language, a great improvement on the uncleanly Restoration school—of 'The Funeral; or, Grief-a-la-Mode,' was produced at Drury Lane, with much success, towards the end of 1701, the principal characters, Puzzle, Sable, and Lady Brumpton, being taken by Wilks, Colley Cibber, and Mrs Verbruggen. It helped to obtain for its author the favourable notice of William the Third, in whose 'last table-book' he was put down for promotion; but the king's death in March 1702 toppled down the airy castles of Steele's ambitious hopes.

Jeremy Collier's uncompromising strictures on the impurity of the Restoration drama had not been without effect on the public taste, and Steele's second dramatic effort was a distinct recognition of their justice. He undertook 'to write a comedy in the severity he required,'[1] and accordingly, at Drury Lane, in December, 1703, appeared 'The Lying Lover; or, the Ladies' Friendship,' which, as Steele afterwards said, was 'damned for its piety.' It was founded upon '*Le Menteur*' of Corneille. His third comedy, produced in April 1705, 'The Tender Husband,' was much more favourably received, and was acted seven times. I have referred to it in another chapter, but here I may quote some remarks by Mr Austin Dobson on the influence in literature long exercised by certain of its characters:—'There is a coun-

[1] 'The comedies of Steele,' says Hazlitt, 'were the first that were written expressly with a view, not to imitate, but to reform the manners of the age. It is almost a misnomer to call them comedies; they are rather homilies in dialogue, in which a number of very pretty young ladies and gentlemen discuss the fashionable topics of gaming, duelling, etc.'

try squire, who in a manner foreshadows the Tony Foxhunter of Addison and the Squire Western of Fielding, while his booby son, "who boggles a little at marrying his own cousin," is more than a mere suggestion of Goldsmith's Tony Lumpkin. But the clearest anticipation of a well-known character is that of the romance-reading Miss Biddy, who objects to anything so ordinary as going out at a door to be married instead of out of a window, and sighs for the "decoration of disguise, serenade, and adventure"; like the veriest Lydia Languish!' Biddy Tipkin was played by Mrs Oldfield, then in the first blossom of her 'sweet-and-twenty,' and she was supported by Wilks, Norris, and the author's friend, Dick Estcourt, whose death afterwards gave rise to one of Steele's most eloquent papers in the *Spectator*. Addison contributed a rather colourless prologue, and there were also, according to Steele, 'many applauded strokes in the piece itself from the same already eminent hand.' The dedication, addressed to Addison, bears witness to the friendship that existed between him and the author:—'I look,' says Steele 'upon my intimacy with you as one of the most valuable enjoyments of my life. At the same time, I hope I make the town no ill compliment for their kind acceptance of this comedy, in acknowledging that it has so far raised my opinion of it, as to make me think it no improper memorial of an inviolable friendship.'

Steele, at this time, was in the possession of at least a decent competency. The Whig influence in the Government had been exerted on his behalf, and in May 1707 he was appointed to the office of Gazetteer, with a salary of three hundred pounds (less taxes to the amount of forty-five pounds); and he was also made one of the Gentlemen Waiters of Prince George of Denmark, with a salary (nett) of one hundred pounds. In right of his first wife—a West Indian lady, the dates of whose marri-

age and death are both unknown—he enjoyed an income of one hundred and fifty pounds from an estate in Barbadoes. In London society he held his own with the best. He was a member of the Kit Cat Club, and at Will's and Button's met on equal terms the most distinguished of his contemporaries. On the 9th of September 1707 he took to himself a second wife—a lady of rare personal charms,—Mistress (or Miss) Mary Scurlock, daughter of one Jonathan Scurlock, Esq., of Llangunnor in Caermarthenshire. There is good reason to believe that they were tenderly attached to each other, in spite of occasional angry outbreaks, provoked by Steele's misconduct. For, sad to say, the genial-hearted captain was very careless in pecuniary matters, exceedingly fond of good company, and a little too partial to good wine. He had, moreover, a generous hand, as everybody who claimed his help did not fail to discover. To do honour to his beautiful wife, he had a residence in Bury Street (the third house from the corner of Jermyn Street), and a country house at Hampton Wick.[1] While he kept a saddle horse for his own use, his wife went abroad in a chariot and pair, sometimes with four horses. They dressed handsomely, and they entertained their friends right royally. Within a year Steele was involved in serious embarrassments ; and henceforth we read continually of debts and difficulties, of all the shifts and mean expedients to which poverty condemns its victims, of promises unfulfilled, of obligations neglected,—a miserable and degrading record. Bailiffs and bill-discounters, and the myrmidons of the lock-up house,—such were too often the boon-companions of the would-be Christian Hero. Addison, in the first year of Steele's married life, lent him a thousand pounds, which was repaid within a twelvemonth ; but another loan he was forced to recover by selling Steele's house and furniture at Hampton, over

[1] It was christened 'The Hovel,' by way of humble contrast to the adjacent Palace.

which he held a bond, and handing to him the overplus. In extenuation of Addison's apparent harshness, it is argued that it was really meant as a friendly warning, and that it was in this sense accepted by 'poor Dick.' Certainly, Steele never permitted it to interfere with his devoted attachment to his rigid creditor. The reader of Goldsmith will remember the scene in his comedy of 'The Good-natured Man,' where young Honeywood passes off the sheriff's officer and his companion as his friends. It was suggested, perhaps, by an incident in Steele's chequered career. He had taken a large and handsome house in Bloomsbury Square, and at a grand entertainment which he gave there, the servants in attendance were bailiffs, whom he had dressed up in livery.

These troubles sat lightly on Steele's broad shoulders, yet they multiplied apace. The death of Prince George of Denmark deprived him of his office of Gentleman-Waiter. He had sanguine expectations of succeeding Addison as Under-Secretary; but Lord Sunderland gave the place to a Scotchman. He might well have lost heart under these continual misfortunes; but with admirable energy he redoubled his exertions in the field of literature, and in the spring of 1709 conceived the happy idea of a tri-weekly journal, which should combine literature with news, and not only serve as an organ of general intelligence, but as a good-natured though honest social censor—endeavouring in the latter capacity to 'expose the false arts of life, pull off the disguises of vanity, cunning, and affectation, and recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behaviour.' This journal he called the *Tatler*, not without allusion to the supposed gossipping propensities of women; and availing himself of the popularity with which Swift had invested the name of Isaac Bickerstaff, he assumed it as his editorial *nom de plume*. The first number appeared on the 12th of April. The days of publication were Tuesday, Thursday, and

Saturday, and the price (after the first four numbers, which were given away) was one penny. Subsequently to No. 26, there was a special issue, at three-halfpence, which included a blank half-sheet for transmission by post. According to a statement in the initial number, it was designed to contain, under the heading of 'White's Chocolate House,' Accounts of Gallantry, Pleasure, and Entertainment; under that of 'Will's,' poetry; under that of 'The Grecian,' learning; besides news from abroad and at home under that of 'St James's Coffee House.' In this last department he hoped to derive much advantage from his post as Gazetteer.

Addison's regular co-operation was not given until eighty numbers had appeared: he was afterwards a frequent contributor. In January 1711, the *Tatler* came to a sudden and unexpected end with No. 271, on the plea that the public had seen through the editorial disguise, and that the object of the work was frustrated by his (Steele's) being so long understood as the author.

'The general purpose of the whole,' he says, 'has been to recommend truth, innocence, honour, and virtue as the chief ornaments of life; but I considered that severity of manners was absolutely necessary to him who would censure others; and for that reason, and that only, chose to talk in a mask. I shall not carry my humility so far as to call myself a vicious man, but at the same time must confess my life is at best but pardonable; and with no greater character than this, a man would make an indifferent progress in attacking prevailing and fashionable vices, which Mr Bickerstaff has done with a freedom of spirit that would have lost both its beauty and efficacy had it been pretended to by Mr Steele.'

Other reasons had probably their share in determining Steele to bring his paper to a close. By writing against Harley in Nos. 190, 191, and 193, he had lost his place as Gazetteer (though he retained the Commissionership of Stamps given him in May, 1710), and could not therefore obtain any early or special information. Moreover, he might wish to secure the valuable aid of Addison in a

more definite form. And again, it is probable that the number of subscribers had fallen off, and Steele might think that a new venture would revive the interest of the public. A collected edition of the defunct periodical was issued in four volumes, and in the preface to this edition Steele paid to Addison the handsomest compliment, I think, which one man of letters has ever paid to another :—

> I have only one gentleman, who will be nameless, to thank for any frequent assistance to me, which indeed it would have been barbarous in him to have denied to one with whom he has lived in an intimacy from childhood, considering the great ease with which he is able to despatch the most entertaining pieces of this nature. This good office he performed with such force of genius, humour, wit, and learning, that I fared like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid ; I was undone by my auxiliary : when I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him.

On the relative merits of Steele's and Addison's contributions, I have already had my say ; but I may here introduce Mr Austin Dobson's delicately appreciative criticism :—

> 'There can be no doubt,' he says, 'of the fine qualities of Addison's, and of the material aid which they afforded to Steele in determining his original design. But his own part in the enterprise was by no means contemptible. In the first place, he had invented it. . . . Secondly, by far the larger proportion of papers are Steele's own ; and, in nearly every case, the new departure, the fresh extension, comes from him. Often Addison's most brilliant efforts are built upon a chance hint thrown off at random by Steele's hurrying pen. In this conjunction, in short, Steele seems to have been the originating, and Addison the elaborating intellect. What Steele, with his keen sympathy and "veined humanity" found in "conversation"—to use the eighteenth-century term for commune with the world—the delicate lapidary skill of his more placid and introspective companion turned in the study into those gems of graceful irony, which, if only by reason of their style and polish, must outlive more ambitious performances. They are faultless in their art, and in this way achieve an excellence which was beyond the range of Steele's quicker and more impulsive nature. But for words which the heart finds when the head is seeking ; for phrases glowing with the white heat

of a generous emotion, for sentences which throb and tingle with manly pity or courageous indignation, we must go to the essays of Steele.'

To Steele we owe that fine expression (according to some authorities, though others give it to Congreve), which so admirably describes the influence exercised by a virtuous and accomplished woman,—'to love her was a liberal education.'—The following passages, taken haphazard from his works, will show how noble he was at heart, and how sincere was his appreciation of the higher qualities, how kindly and how genial was his humour:—

'It is really monstrous to see how unaccountably it prevails among men to take the liberty of displacing each other.'

'It is great vanity to think any one will attend to a thing, because it is your quarrel. You must make your satire the concern of society in general if you would have it regarded.'

'A favour well bestowed is almost as great an honour to him who confers it as to him who receives it.'

'We have a member of our club, who, when Sir Jeffrey falls asleep, wakens him with snoring. This makes Sir Jeffrey hold up for some moments the longer, to see there are men younger than himself among us, who are more lethargic than he is.'

'In conversation, the medium is neither to affect silence nor eloquence; not to value our affectation, and to endeavour to excel us who are of your company, are equally injuries.'

'A pedant among men of learning and sense, is like an ignorant servant giving an account of a polite conversation. You may find he has brought with him more than could have entered into his head without being there, but still that he is not a bit wiser than if he had not been there at all.'

'Methuselah might be half-an-hour in telling what o'clock it was; but, as for us post-diluvians, we ought to do everything in haste; and in our speeches, as well as actions, remember that our time is short. A man that talks for a quarter of an hour together in company, if I meet him frequently, takes up a great part of my spun. A quarter of an hour may be reckoned the eight-and-fortieth part of a day, a day the three-hundred-and-sixtieth part of a year, and a year the threescore-and-tenth part of life. By this moral arithmetic, supposing a man to be in the talking world one-third part of the day, whoever gives another a quarter of an hour's hearing, makes him a

sacrifice of more than the four-hundredth-thousandth part of his conversable life.'

'Tom Lizard told us a story the other day, of some persons which our family knew very well, with so much humour and life, that it caused a great deal of mirth at the tea-table. His brother Will, the Templar, was highly delighted with it, and the next day, being with some of his Inns-of-Court acquaintance, resolved [whether out of the benevolence, or the pride of his heart, I will not determine] to entertain them with what he called 'a pleasant humour enough.' I was in great pain for him when I heard him begin, and was not at all surprised to find the company very little moved by it. Will blushed, looked round the room, and with a forced laugh, "Faith, gentlemen," said he, "I do not know what makes you look so grave, it was an admirable story when I heard it."'

'Sir Roger was saying last night, that he was of opinion none but men of fine parts deserved to be hanged. The reflections of such men are so delicate upon all occurrences which they are concerned in, that they should be exposed to more than ordinary infamy and punishment, for offending against such quick admonitions as their own souls only give them, and blunting the fine edge of their minds in such a manner, that they are no more shocked at vice and folly, than men of slower capacities. There is no greater monster in being, than a very ill man of great parts. He lives like a man in a palsy, with one side of him dead, while perhaps he enjoys the satisfaction of luxury, of wealth, of ambition, he has lost the taste of good will, of friendship, of conscience. Scarecrow, the beggar in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, who disabled himself in his right leg, and asks alms all day to get himself a warm supper at night, is not half so despicable a wretch as such a man of sense. The beggar has no relish above sensations; he finds rest more agreeable than action; and while he has a warm fire and his doxy, never reflects that he deserves to be whipped. Every man who terminates his satisfactions and enjoyments within the supply of his own necessities and passions is, says Sir Roger, in my eye, as poor a rogue as Scarecrow.'

'It happened at Athens, during a public representation of some play exhibited in honour of the Commonwealth, that an old gentleman came too late for a place suitable to his age and quality. Many of the young gentlemen, who observed the difficulty and confusion he was in, made signs to him that they would accommodate him if he came where they sat. The good man bustled through the crowd accordingly; but when he came to the seats to which he was invited, the jest was to sit close and expose him, as he stood out of countenance, to the whole audience. The frolic went round all the Athenian

benches. But on those occasions, there were also particular places assigned for foreigners. When the good man skulked towards the boxes appointed for the Lacedemonians, that honest people, more virtuous than polite, rose up all to a man, and with the greatest respect received him among them. The Athenians being suddenly touched with a sense of the Spartan virtue and their own degeneracy, gave a thunder of applause ; and the old man cried out,—"The Athenians understand what is good, but the Lacedemonians practise it!"'

'I remember a humorous fellow at Oxford, when he heard anyone had spoken ill of him, used to say,—"I will not take my revenge of him until I have forgiven him." What he meant by this was, that he would not enter upon this subject, until it was grown as indifferent to him as any other ; and I have, by this rule, seen him more than once triumph over his adversary with an inimitable spirit and humour ; for he came to the assault against a man full of sore places and he himself invulnerable.'

'By a fine gentleman, I mean a man completely qualified as well for the service and good, as for the ornament and delight of society. When I consider the frame of mind peculiar to a gentleman, I suppose it graced with all the dignity and elevation of spirit that human nature is capable of. To this I would have joined a clear understanding, a reason free from prejudice, a steady judgment, and an extensive knowledge. When I think of the heart of a gentleman, I imagine it firm and intrepid, void of all inordinate passions, and full of tenderness, compassion, and benevolence. When I view the fine gentleman with regard to his manners, methinks I see him modest without bashfulness, frank and affable without impertinence, obliging and complaisant without servility, cheerful and in good humour without noise. These amiable qualities are not easily obtained ; neither are there many men that have a genius to excel this way. A finished gentleman is perhaps the most uncommon of all the great characters in life. Besides the natural endowments with which this distinguished man is to be born, he must run through a long series of education. Before he makes his appearance and shines in the world, he must be principled in religion, instructed in all the moral virtues, and led through the whole course of the polite arts and sciences. He should be no stranger to courts and to camps ; he must travel to open his mind, to enlarge his views, to learn the politics and interests of foreign states, as well as to fashion and polish himself, and to get clear of national prejudices, of which every country has its share. To all these more essential improvements, he must not forget to add the fashionable ornaments of life, such as are the languages and the bodily exercises most in vogue ;

neither would I have him think even dress itself beneath h notice.'

'It is no very uncommon thing in the world to meet with men probity; there are likewise a great many men of honour to be foun Men of courage, men of sense, and men of letters are frequent; b a true fine gentleman is what one seldom sees. He is properly compound of the various good qualities that embellish mankind. A the great poet animates all the different parts of learning by the fore of his genius, and irradiates all the compass of his knowledge by th lustre and brightness of his imagination; so all the great and sol perfections of life appear in the finished gentleman, with a beautif gloss and varnish; everything he says or does is accompanied wi a manner, or rather a charm, that draws the admiration and goo will of every beholder.'

'No man ought to have the esteem of the rest of the world, f any actions which are disagreeable to those maxims which prevail a the standards of behaviour in the country wherein he lives. What opposite to the eternal rules of reason and good sense must be e cluded from any place in the carriage of a well-bred man. I did n I confess, explain myself enough on this subject, when I called Dori court a clown, and made it an instance of it that he called the oran wench Double Tripe: I should have shown, that humanity oblig a gentleman to give no part of human kind reproach, for what the whom they reproach, may possibly have, in common with the mo virtuous and worthy amongst us. When a gentleman speaks coarsel he has dressed himself clean to no purpose. The clothing of o minds certainly ought to be regarded before that of our bodies. T betray in a man's talk a corrupted imagination, is a much great offence against the conversation of gentlemen than any negligence dress imaginable. But this sense of the matter is so far from bei received among people even of condition, that Vocifer passes for fine gentleman. He is loud, haughty, gentle, soft, and obsequio by turns, just as a little understanding and great impudence prom him at the present moment. He passes among the silly part our women for a man of wit, because he is generally in doubt. H contradicts with a shrug, and confutes with a certain sufficiency, professing such and such a thing is above his capacity. Wh makes his character the pleasanter is, that he is a professed delud of women; and because the empty coxcomb has no regard to an thing that is of itself sacred and inviolable. I have heard an u married lady of fortune say, it is pity so fine a gentleman as Voci is so great an athiest. The crowds of such inconsiderable creatu that infest all places of assembling, every reader will have in his e

rom his own observation; but would it not be worth considering hat sort of figure a man who formed himself upon those principles mong us which are agreeable to the dictates of honour and religion ould make in the familiar and ordinary occurrences of life?'

Gay bears witness to the extensive and beneficial influence of the *Tatler*:—

'It is incredible to conceive,' he says, 'the effect his writings ave had upon the town; how many thousand follies they have either uite banished, or given a check to; how much countenance they ave added to virtue and religion; how many people they have endered happy, by showing that it was their own fault if they were ot so; and lastly, how entirely they have convinced our fops and oung men of the advantage of learning.'

Hazlitt says of the *Tatler*, that it contains only alf the number of volumes which the *Spectator* contains, ut has at least 'an equal quantity of wit and sense.' He dds:—

'The first sprightly runnings are there; it has more of the original pirit, more of the freshness and of the stamp of nature. The indiations of character and strokes of humour are more true and requent; the reflections that suggest themselves arise more from he occasion, and are less spun out into regular dissertations.'

On the 1st of March 1711, Steele introduced a new iterary venture; and the *Spectator* made its appearance s a daily paper at the price of a penny. In the first umber, Addison sketched — chiefly from himself—the ortrait of the introspective and thoughtful observer rom whom the journal took its name. In the second, teele's lively and vigorous pen delineated the members f the famous Club which owed its existence to his appy genius—Sir Roger de Coverley, Sir Andrew Freeort, Captain Sentry, and the gallant Will Honeycomb. hese were invented by Steele, though to their full evelopment Addison's fine humour contributed largely. o wonder that a periodical supported by two such ien enjoyed a great success, and that it survived even

the Stamp Act, which rendered necessary an increas of its price. Until December 6, 1712 (No. 555), maintained a prosperous career, attaining a daily sa of something like ten thousand copies. Out of th five hundred and fifty-five papers, Steele wrote tw hundred and thirty-six, and Addison two hundred an seventy-four, the remainder being supplied by Budgell Hughes, Pope, and others. It is one of the mysteric of literature why this successful enterprise was abruptl brought to a close. Possibly, the two chief contributo may have grown conscious of a strain upon their re sources; or Steele's restless temper may have longe for something new; or the growing political divergence be tween Addison and himself may have affected the cordialit of their relations. His patriotic Whiggism had foun vent, at the beginning of 1712, in a spirited pamphle *The Englishman's Thanks to the Duke of Marlborough* and in the course of a few months, his partisan enthu siasm so overleaped official trammels, that he declare open hostility against the Tory Government; resignin his Commissionership of Stamps, and his pension a Prince George's Gentleman-in-Waiting—an honourabl instance of political honesty. Meanwhile, on the 12t of March 1713, he had begun the *Guardian* on th lines of the *Spectator*, but with something of a polit cal element, which he continued as a daily half-shee to October 1st, when it was suspended, owing to h disagreement with Tonson, the publisher. The Guardia is a Mr Nestor Ironside, an old gentleman officiatin as guardian to the sons and daughters of Lady Lizar the widow of Sir Marmaduke Lizard. Pope, Addiso Tickell, and Warburton were among the contributors.

In the *Guardian* for August 7, 1713, Steele insisted tha the stipulation in the Treaty of Utrecht for the dem lition of the fortifications of Dunkirk should be carrie out. To this an angry reply was made in the To

Examiner, which called from Steele his pamphlet on *The Importance of Dunkirk Considered*, addressed to the Bailiff of Stockbridge—the borough which he represented in the House of Commons. Swift answered in a singularly ferocious invective, *The Importance of the Guardian Considered.*[1] In a memoir of Steele, reference must needs be made to this political warfare, though it was concerned with subjects which are now lost in the densest obscurity. The indefatigable penman and politician started *The Englishman* on the 6th of October; but it ran only to the 15th of February 1714. About a month before its cessation, appeared the most considerable and influential of his political essays, *The Crisis*,[2] in which assisted by William Moore, he vindicated the Hanoverian succession, and enlarged on the advantages it would bring to the nation. His enemies took advantage of it to accuse him, in the House of Commons, of uttering seditious publications; and though he defended himself with great eloquence, and was strongly supported by Walpole, General Stanhope, and the Whig leaders, a large majority decreed his expulsion (March 18th).[3]

With unflagging vigour he continued his literary avocations. *The Lover*, begun on February 25, was followed by *The Reader*, begun on the 22d of April. The latter had a very short career, terminating on the 10th of May, and *The Lover* collapsed on the 27th. In the midst

[1] Swift was also, without doubt, the author of the coarsely written *Character of Richard Steele, Esq.*

[2] The full title runs,—'*The Crisis*; or, a Discourse representing from the most authentic records, the just causes of the late Happy Revolution; and the several Settlements of the Crowns of England and Scotland on her Majesty; and on the Demise of Her Majesty without Issue, upon the most illustrious Princess Sophia.' Swift replied (on February 26) with *The Public Spirit of the Whigs*, the reactionary tone of which provoked the House of Lords to summon before them its printer and publisher, and commit them to the custody of the Black Rod. At this time the majority of the Lords was Whig, the majority in the Lower House, Tory.

[3] 245 against 152.

of his activity, Queen Anne died; and Steele reaped the reward due to his political services, and personal sacrifices, in his appointment to the surveyorship of the Royal Stables at Hampton Court. He was also made a justice of the peace, and a deputy lieutenant of the county of Middlesex. Nor had Fortune yet ceased her compensations. The licence of Drury Lane having expired, the managers solicited Steele's influence to obtain its renewal; and rightly appreciating the services he had rendered to the stage by his admirable dramatic criticisms, they invited him to join them as Governor, at a salary of seven hundred pounds a year,—afterwards increased, when a patent was substituted for the licence, to one thousand pounds. He was also returned to the first Parliament of George I. as member for Boroughbridge, in Yorkshire, and on the 8th of April 1715, was one of three deputy lieutenants who were knighted upon going up to the King with an address. His loyalty and his gratitude found expression on the following 20th of May, the royal birthday, in a sumptuous entertainment, which he gave at his house in Villiers Street, Strand. There were two hundred guests; and for their delectation a prologue, written by Tickell, was recited by Miss Younger, and an epilogue, by Addison, was delivered by Mr Wilks. The latter, with its happy allusions to the host's inexhaustible activity and ingenuity, must be put before the reader:—

> 'The sage whose guests you are to-night is known
> To watch the public weal, though not his own:
> Still have his thoughts uncommon schemes pursued,
> And teemed with projects for his country's good.
> Early in youth his enemies have shown
> How narrowly he missed the chemic stone;[1]
> Not Friar Bacon promised England more;
> Our artist, lavish of his fancied ore,'

[1] Alluding to Steele's pursuit of the philosopher's stone, for which purpose he had a laboratory at Poplar.

Could he have brought his great design to pass,
Had walled us round with gold instead of brass.
That project sunk, you saw him entertain
A notion more chimerical and vain :
To give chaste morals to ungoverned youth,[1]
To gamesters honesty, to statesmen truth ;
To make them virtuous all ;—a thought more bold
Than that of changing dross and lead to gold.
Of late, with more heroic warmth inspired,
For still his country's good our champion fired ;
In treaties versed, in politics grown wise,
He looked on Dunkirk with suspicious eyes ;
Into its dark foundations boldly dug,
And overthrew in fight the Lord Sieur Tugghe.[2]
But now to nobler thoughts his view extends,
Which I may tell, since none are here but friends.
In a few months, he is not without hope
(But 'tis a secret) to convert the Pope : [3]
Of this, however, we'll inform you better,
Soon as his Holiness receives his letter.[4]
Meanwhile he celebrates (for 'tis his way)
With something singular this happy day,
His honest zeal ambitious to approve
For the great monarch he was born to love ;
Resolved in arms and art to do him right,
And serve his sovereign like a trusty knight.'

One of the projects of the ever-active Steele was to establish in his house a periodical réunion or conversazione of the kind now so popular, at which musical performances, plays, and recitations were to be given. He proposed to call it *The Censorium*, from the room in which it was to be held. A well-known anecdote is told in connection with the construction of this private theatre.

[1] His object in the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and the *Guardian*.

[2] The Sieur Tugghe, as deputy of the Dunkirk magistrates, delivered a memorial to the Queen ; to which Steele's pamphlet, *The Importance of Dunkirk Considered*, was an answer.

[3] Referring to his humorous dedication to the Pope, prefixed to *The Ecclesiastical History of Late Years*, published in 1715.

[4] The dedication to *An Account of the State of the Roman Catholic Religion throughout the World*, really written by Hoadley.

'Sir Richard,' says Dr Drake, 'wishing to ascertain whether it was as well calculated to gratify the ear as the eye, desired the carpenter, who had completed the work, to ascend a pulpit placed at one end of the building and speak a few sentences. The carpenter obeyed, but when mounted found himself utterly at a loss for the matter of his harangue. Sir Richard begged he would pronounce whatever first came into his head. Thus encouraged, the new-made orator began, and, looking steadily at the knight, in a voice like thunder exclaimed,—"Sir Richard Steele, here has I, and these here men, been doing your work for three months, and never seen the colour of your money. When are you to pay us? I cannot pay my journeymen without money, and money I must have." Sir Richard replied that he was in raptures with the eloquence, but by no means admired the subject.'

In our rapid survey of Steele's improving fortunes, I have omitted to notice some of the productions of his untiring pen. Of the three volumes of *The Ladies' Library* (1714), it is assumed that he supplied only the preface and the dedications, which are addressed respectively to the Countess of Burlington, Mrs Catharine Bovey, and Lady Steele. All the tenderness of Steele's nature crops up in the words which he pours out in praise of his wife:—

'It is impossible for me,' he says, 'to look back on many evils and pains which I have suffered since we came together, without a pleasure which is not to be expressed, from the proofs I have had in those circumstances, of your unwearied goodness. How often has your tenderness removed pain from my sick head! How often anguish from my afflicted heart! With how skilful patience have I known you comply with the vain projects which pain has suggested, to have an aching limb removed by journeying from one side of a room to another; how often, the next instant, travelled the same ground again, without telling your patient it was to no purpose to change his situation! If there are such beings as guardian angels, thus are they employed: I will no more believe one of them more good, in its inclinations, than I can conceive it more charming in its form than my wife.

'But I offend, and forget that what I say to you is to appear in public. You are so great a lover of home, that I know it will be irksome to you to go into the world even in an applause. I will end this without so much as mentioning your little flock, or your own amiable figure at the head of it. That I think them preferable

to all other children, I know is the effect of passion and instinct; that I believe you the best of wives, I know proceeds from experience and reason.'

In October 1714, appeared *Apology for Himself and His Writings*, and in May 1715, his lively, but, necessarily, prejudiced *Account of the State of the Roman Catholic Religion throughout the World*. *The Englishman* entered upon its second volume on the 10th of July, and came to a close on the 21st of November. A month later, and Steele, who had great faith in periodical literature, started *Town-Talk*. *The Tea Table*, begun on February 6th, 1716, and *Chit-Chat*, on the 6th of March. These ephemeral productions call for no special notice. In June he was made a Commissioner to deal with Scottish estates forfeited in the rebellion of 1715, and for some time his duties required him to reside in Scotland. In 1718, his inventive faculty anticipated the modern method of bringing seafish alive to market in well-boats, and he obtained a patent for what he called 'the Fish Post;' but he was not successful in its realisation. In the same year he lost his 'Dear Prue' (December 26), who was buried in Westminster Abbey. She left him with a son and two daughters.

In the following year Lord Sunderland introduced a bill for the purpose of limiting the number of peers, the effect of which would have been to deprive the Crown of one of its most valuable prerogatives, and to exclude the Commons from a share in the honours of the Upper House. The unconstitutional character of the measure revolted Steele, though it emanated from his own party; and, in opposition to it, he started *The Plebeian*. Addison, adhering to his party, brought out, in reply, *The Old Whig*; and this political difference ruptured a friendship which had existed intact from boyhood. As Addison died within a few months, there was no opportunity given for repairing the breach. To

punish Steele for his scrupulousness, the Government threatened him with the loss of his patent at Drury Lane, and for the protection of his interests and those of the stage, he thereupon started *The Theatre*, a bi-weekly paper, which lasted from January 2d to April 5th, 1720. He failed, however, to avert the blow; and his patent was revoked by the Duke of Newcastle, as Lord Chamberlain, on the 22d of January. John Dennis, the critic, about the same time made a ferocious attack on Steele as 'Sir John Edgar'—the *nom de plume* under which Steele had started *The Theatre*—to which he replied with much dignity and calmness, and with that frank good nature which was one of his most charming characteristics.

His native shrewdness and good sense led him to detect the hollowness of the South Sea speculation, and he endeavoured—with little result, however—to warn his countrymen from being deluded by it, in his two pamphlets of *The Crisis of Property*, and *A Nation a Family*. Walpole, his old friend and ally, having become Prime Minister, he recovered, in 1720, his lucrative position at Drury Lane as 'Governor of the Royal Company of Comedians.' In the same year he gave a fresh proof of the sincere and loyal admiration he had always placed at the feet of Addison, in the preface which he wrote to the second edition of Addison's comedy of 'The Drummer.' I have always looked upon it as a piece of manly and vigorous writing, which fully justifies one's kindly feelings towards 'Dick Steele.' I doubt whether under similar circumstances, Addison would have done as much.

Steele's last and best play, 'The Conscious Lovers,' was produced at Drury Lane, on the 7th of November 1722, with complete success. The King, to whom it was dedicated, marked his approbation of it by a gift of five hundred pounds; and a testimony to its high moral tone is

borne by Fielding's Parson Adams, who distinguishes it and Addison's 'Cato' as the only plays fit for a Christian to see. It was founded upon Terence's 'Andria,' and, as we elsewhere point out, is a very effective protest against the then fashionable vice of dueiling. Some traits of its hero, Bevil, have been adopted by Richardson in his *Sir Charles Grandison.*

Steele began, but did not finish, two more comedies—'The School of Action' and 'The Gentlemen.' Harassed by a vexatious lawsuit, broken down in fortune, and failing in health, he retired in 1724 to the estate which had come to him through his wife, at Llangunnor, near Caermarthen. There, stricken with palsy, he was living in retirement when George I. died. One whom he had befriended says of him:—'I was told he retained his cheerful sweetness of temper to the last, and would often be carried out of a summer's evening when the country lads and lasses were assembled at their rural sports, and with his pencil give an order on his agent, the mercer, for a new gown to the best dancer.' He died on the 1st of September 1729, aged fifty-eight; and was buried in St Peter's Church, Caermarthen. Of his five children two only survived him, and one of these, Mary, the youngest, died in the following year. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, married a Welsh judge, who was afterwards the third Lord Trevor of Bromham. His son Richard died in 1716; and Eugene in 1723.

There are several portraits of Sir Richard. Collating these, we come to the conclusion that he was a man of ordinary stature, portly, with a good-humoured, florid countenance, bushy dark eyebrows, bright brown eyes, rather deeply set, an abundance of curling brown hair, and a general expression of *bonhomie* and candour.

In his *History of the English People*, Mr J. R. Green has sketched with much force and point the characteristics of the Queen Anne essayist:—

'He is a gentleman,' he says, 'who chats to a world of gentlemen, and whose chat is shaped and coloured by a sense of what he owes to his company. . . . He felt little of the pressure of those spiritual problems that had weighed on the temper of his fathers, but the removal of the pressure left him a gay, light-hearted, good-humoured observer of the social life about him, amused and glad to be amused by it all, looking on with a leisurely and somewhat indolent interest, a quiet enjoyment, a quiet scepticism, a shy, reserved consciousness of their beauty and poetry, at the lives of common men and common women. It is to the essayist that we owe our sense of the infinite variety and picturesqueness of the human world about us; it was he who for the first time made every street and every house teem with living people for us; who found a subtle interest in their bigotries and prejudice, their inconsistencies, their eccentricities, their oddities; who gave to their very dulness a charm. In a word, it was he who first opened to men the world of modern fiction. Nor does English literature owe less to him in its form. Humour has always been an English quality, but with the essayist humour for the first time severed itself from farce; it was no longer forced, riotous, extravagant; it acquired taste, gentleness, adroitness, *finesse*, lightness of touch, a delicate colouring of playful fancy. It preserved, indeed, its old sympathy with pity, with passion; but it learned how to pass with more ease into pathos, into love, into the reverence that touches us as we smile. And hand-in-hand with this new development of humour went a moderation won from humour, whether in matters of religion, of politics, or society; a literary courtesy and reserve, a well-bred temperance and modesty of tone and phrase. It was in the hands of the town-bred essayist that our literature first became urbane.'

That he invented the essay, and introduced into our literature this fine leaven of urbaneness, is the immortal merit of Sir Richard Steele.

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CHAPTER II.

THE LESSER PROSE WRITERS.

Dr Arbuthnot—History of John Bull—Bernard de Mandeville—Fable of the Bees—Bishop Berkeley—Dr Prideaux—The Characteristics—Earl of Shaftesbury—Dr Clarke—Lord Bolingbroke—Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

ONE of the wittiest of men of letters in the Augustine age was Dr JOHN ARBUTHNOT, an able and prosperous physician, and the friend of Pope and Swift, Prior and Gay. The son of a clergyman of the Scotch Episcopal Church, he was born at Arbuthnot, in Kincardineshire, in 1667. He was educated at the University of Aberdeen, where he studied medicine, and took his degree of M.D. His father, a partisan of the Stuarts, lost his benefice at the Revolution, and Arbuthnot then found his way to London, where at first he supported himself by teaching mathematics, but soon became known as an author, a physician, a wit, and a Tory. He talked well, and this helped him into a gradually-increasing practice, while his caustic *Examination of Dr Woodward's Account of the Deluge*, in 1697, and his *Essay on the Usefulness of Mathematical Learning*, in 1707, attracted the attention of literary circles. Besides, fortune or circumstance greatly favoured him. He was at Epsom when Prince George of Denmark was taken ill there; was called upon to prescribe; and treated the case so successfully, that he was appointed the Prince's regular physician. In 1709 he was also made physician to

the Queen, and fellow of the College of Physicians. He was already an F.R.S., and probably stood at the head of his profession in London, while among the wits and poets he enjoyed all the privileges of fraternity.

In 1712 he produced his amazingly clever political satire—which in itself might confute the ill-natured allegations of the deficiency of Scotchmen in the matter of wit or humour—*Law is a Bottomless Pit ; or, The History of John Bull.* Its method was suggested by Swift's *Tale of a Tub,* but the treatment is entirely Arbuthnot's own. The allegory is sustained with unfailing vigour and ability, and the descriptive passages teem with a rich, subdued humour. which has much of the well-known Scotch *pawkiness* to flavour it. Its political tone is of course strongly Tory ; the object being to ridicule the Duke of Marlborough, and inflame the public mind against the Whig statesmen of the day. The great Duke is treated coarsely :—

Hones was an old cunning attorney ; and though this was the first considerable suit that ever he was engaged in, he showed himself superior in address to most of his profession ; he kept always good clerks ; he loved money, was smooth-tongued, gave good words, and seldom lost his temper ; he was not worse than an infidel, for he provided plentifully for his family, but he loved himself better than them all : the neighbours reported that he was henpecked, which was impossible by such a mild-spirited woman as his wife was.

Far cleverer, and in better taste, is the contrast drawn between England and Scotland — John Bull and his sister Peg :—

'John had a sister,' he says, 'a poor girl that had been starved at nurse ; anybody would have guessed miss to have been bred up under the influence of a cruel stepdame, and John to be the fondling of a tender mother. John looked ruddy and plump, with a pair of cheeks like a trumpeter ; miss looked pale and wan, as if she had the green sickness ; and no wonder, for John was the darling—he had all the good bits, was crammed with good pullet, chicken, pig, goose, and capon, while miss had only a little oatmeal and water, or

a dry crust without butter. John had his golden pippins, peaches, and nectarines ; poor miss a crab-apple, sloe, or a blackberry. Master lay in the best apartment, with his bed-chamber towards the south sun ; miss lodged in a garret, exposed to the north wind, which shrivelled her countenance. However, this usage, though it stunted the girl in her growth, gave her a hardy constitution ; she had life and spirit in abundance, and knew when she was ill-used ; now and then she would seize upon John's commons, snatch a leg of a pullet, or a bit of good beef, for which they were sure to go to fisticuffs. Master was indeed too strong for her, but miss would not yield in the least point, but even when master had got her down, she would scratch and bite like a tiger ; when he gave her a cuff on the ear, she would prick him with her knitting-needle.'

To the *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus*, designed by Pope, Arbuthnot contributed largely. In fact, the title of this brilliantly witty work is from his lively pen, which happily combined jest and satire with sound sense and judicious reflection. The same combination is visible in his *Art of Political Lying*, and in his *Treatise concerning the Altercation or Scolding of the Ancients.*

On the accession of George I., Arbuthnot was deprived of his Court appointments, and he removed from St James's to Dover Street, where he continued in professional practice for many years. He died in 1735,—having well deserved as his epitaph the praise which Swift bestowed on him :—'He has more wit than we all have, and more humanity than wit.' He was the author of several medical works, and of desultory papers on ancient coins, weights, and measures.

A satirist of very different character was BERNARD DE MANDEVILLE, born at Dort, in Holland, about 1670. Having studied medicine, he come over to England, where he graduated, and began to practise as a physician. But he had something to say, and the age not providing him with the orator's platform or the lecturer's rostrum, he

was forced to say it through the press, which was then indeed the only means of access to public opinion. He spoke at first in rhyme—and very badly; but he soon found a fitting vehicle in prose—strong, lucid, vigorous prose—and the indifferent sarcastic verses which had appeared in 1700, under the title of *The Grumbling Hive; or, Knaves turned Honest*, developed, in 1723, into the famous *Fable of the Bees*, whereof the principal portion is the prose commentary. The book was a kind of avatar of the revolt against the tyrannies of conventionalism which was to throw so lurid a lustre on the eighteenth century. Its main thesis is, of course, a mistaken one,—that social corruptions and mistakes conduce to the general happiness; but in working it out, he indicates some important ecomonic truths, and points some weighty morals. He represents the bees as living in their hives like men, 'millions endeavouring to supply each other's lust and vanity,' priests, physicians, lawyers, statesmen, soldiers, all sustained by the follies and vices of the mass. Luxury, pride, and envy—these he represents to be the omnipotent incentives to work. But a revulsion of sentiment having taken place in the hive, vice is condemned, and honesty becomes popular. What is the result? There is no more cheating, and consequently no more employment for law and its myrmidons: judges, jailers, and hangmen vanish into obscurity. Invalids confine their patronage to medical men who know something of the art. Priests who know themselves to be unfit for the proper discharge of their duties, resign their benefices. Debt ceases, for everybody lives within his means, and pays ready money. The soldier sheathes his sword, for public opinion condemns wars of aggression. What is the result? Here, I think, Mandeville becomes ironical, though his critics accept his conclusions literally. There is a general fall of prices and extinction of the trades that depended upon luxury. So prosperous is its social condition, that it excites the envy

of foreign nations, and the hive is invaded. But its inhabitants, fighting for freedom and their homes, oppose an heroic resistance, and win a splendid victory.

> 'Hardened with toils and exercise,
> They counted ease itself a vice;
> Which so improved their temperance
> That, to avoid extravagance,
> They flew into a hollow tree,
> Blest with content and honesty.'

To his arguments Bishop Berkeley thought it necessary to reply, and Mandeville retorted upon the Bishop in his *Letters to Dion*. By a good many people—the privileged classes, devout believers in the doctrine that 'whatever is, is right,'—the bitter, crushing satire of *The Fable of the Bees* was accepted as an attack upon religion—which was bad, and upon property—which was worse; and the grand jury of Westminster (in 1723), assuming the office of a *censor morum*, presented it at the assizes as 'having a direct tendency to the subversion of all religion and civil government, our duty to the Almighty, our love to our country, and regard to our oaths.'

Mandeville, in 1728, added a second part to his *Fable*. Among his other works may be named *Free Thoughts on Religion*, and *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour, and the Usefulness of Christianity in War*. The tendency of his writings is by some persons considered doubtful; but without question he felt very strongly the diseased moral condition of society in his time, and endeavoured to reform it by the cauterisation of a trenchant irony and an uncompromising satire. To me it seems that there is nothing very dangerous in such writing as the following, which, after all, is but the epigrammatic expression of a commonplace truth:—

> 'If the great ones of the clergy, as well as the laity, of any country whatever, had no value for earthly pleasures, and did not endeavour to gratify their appetites, why are envy and revenge so raging among

them, and all the other passions, improved and refined upon in courts of princes more than anywhere else ; and why are their repasts, their recreations, and whole manner of living, always such as are approved of, courted, and imitated by the most sensual people of the same country? If, despising all visible decorations, they were only in love with the embellishments of the mind, why should they borrow so many of the implements, and make use of the most darling toys, of the luxurious? Why should a lord treasurer, or a bishop, or even the Grand Signior, or the Pope of Rome, to be good and virtuous, and endeavour the conquest of his passions, have occasion for greater revenues, richer furniture, or a more numerous attendance as to personal service, than a private man? What virtue is it the exercise of which requires so much pomp and superfluity, as are to be seen by all men in power? A man has as much opportunity to practise temperance that has but one dish at a meal, as he that is constantly served with three courses and a dozen dishes in each. One may exercise as much patience and be as full of self-denial on a few flocks, without curtains or tester, as in a velvet bed that is sixteen feet high. The virtuous possessions of the mind are neither charge nor burden ; a man may bear misfortunes with fortitude in a garret, forgive injuries afoot, and be chaste, though he has not a shirt to his back ; and therefore I shall never believe but that an indifferent sculler, if he was entrusted with it, might carry all the learning and religion that one man can contain, as well as a barge with six oars, especially if it was but to cross from Lambeth to Westminster : or that humility is so ponderous a virtue, that it requires six horses to draw it.'

Mandeville died about 1733. An examination of his philosophical system—if system it can be called—has been undertaken by Mr Leslie Stephen in his *Essays on Free Thinking*.

From the bane we turn to the antidote ; from Mandeville to Dr GEORGE BERKELEY, Bishop of Cloyne, to whom Pope, in a graceful but not undeserved compliment, ascribed 'every virtue under Heaven,' and whose life was, indeed, a pure, a tranquil, and an unblotted record. Though it was prolonged until far into the reign of George II., while he was only thirty when Queen Anne died, he fairly belongs to the Augustan age of writers, and at the

death of Anne was already known by his metaphysical system, which Byron has attempted to dispose of in a single satirical couplet :—

> 'When Bishop Berkeley said, "There was no matter,"
> And proved it, 'twas no matter what he said.'

Erroneous, it certainly was ; but in all error there is an admixture of truth, and in Berkeley's system what was true had a large place. Moreover, in its day it was useful as a protest against materialistic theories, and as a noble effort to form a lofty and just conception of man in his relation to God. In working it out he attempts, with unfailing ingenuity, to show that all sensible qualities or external things, such as hardness, softness, heat, cold, and the like, are simply ideas—ideas of the mind, and incapable of existence in any insentient substance ; but this is to place us in a world of unrealities and shadows, where 'things are not what they seem.' Accepting those ideas, not as states of the individual mind, but as separate entities existing in it, and capable of existing in other minds, not in them alone, and conceiving that they did not perish when they temporarily passed away, because they recovered after a larger or shorter interval, he inferred the necessary existence of the Deity ; for it became a matter of necessity that, during the intervals of recurrence, they should dwell in some Omnipresent mind. To this hypothesis a fatal objection may be urged ; that ideas are nothing more than the effects produced upon the mind by certain causes, and that not one of them lasts longer than the cause which produces the effect. To assert that our ideas exist in the Divine mind is only to say that our mind itself exists in the Divine mind. The sensation of colour is not something apart from or in addition to the mind, but the mind existing in a certain state, that is, as influenced and moulded by a certain cause.

George Berkeley was born at Kilcrin, near Thomas-

town, in Kilkenny county, on the 12th of March 1685. He was educated as Swift had been, first at Kilkenny School, and afterwards at Trinity College, Dublin, where his mathematical facility amazed his fellow-students. He was admitted a fellow in 1707, and in 1709, when only twenty-four years of age, published his *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, in which, according to Dugald Stewart, he endeavours to distinguish the immediate and natural objects of sight from the *seemingly instantaneous* conclusions which experience and habit teach us to draw from them in our earliest infancy ; or, in the more concise metaphysical language of a later period, to draw the line between the *original* and *acquired* perceptions of the eye. The gist of Berkeley's essay, according to his latest and his best biographer, Professor Fraser, is this : —What is really meant by our *seeing* things in ambient space ? And his answer may be thus expressed :—'What, before we reflected, we had supposed to be a seeing of real things, is not seeing really extended things at all, but only seeing something that is constantly connected with their extension ; what is vulgarly called seeing them, is, in fact, reading about them ; when we are every day using our eyes we are virtually interpreting a book ; when by sight we are determining for ourselves the actual distances, sizes, shapes, and situations of things, we are simply translating the words of the universal and divine language of the senses.' In 1710 the young metaphysician made a vigorous assault upon scholastic abstraction, in not the least interesting or remarkable of his works, a *Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*. A strange obliquity of view is apparent in his *Discourse of Passive Obedience*, published in 1711. Two years later appeared his *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, in which he formulated his ideal system with much vigour of imagination and beauty of language.

His writings had introduced him to the most culti-

vated society in London—to the brilliant company of stars, among which Swift and Pope, Steele and Addison, shone conspicuous ; and in this way he became acquainted with the erratic Earl of Peterborough, whom he accompanied on his embassy to Sicily as secretary and chaplain. Afterwards he made the 'grand tour' as tutor to Mr Ashe, son of the Bishop of Clogher. The course of his travels brought him to Paris, where he was introduced to Malebranche, then an old man and an invalid, suffering from disease of the lungs. They engaged in a warm argument on the ideal system, Malebranche, indeed, with such impetuosity as to increase the violence of his disorder, and induce a fatal termination in a few days.

Through the recommendation of the Earl of Burlington, Berkeley, soon after his return from the Continent became chaplain to the Duke of Grafton, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and was promoted to the deanery of Derry. He was too sanguine a philosopher, however, and too true a Christian priest, to lie supine in the soft indolence of a decanal stall ; and he proceeded to put into execution a scheme which had long been in his mind for converting the North American Indians to Christianity by 'a college to be erected in the Summer or Bermuda Islands.' Enthusiasm carries a contagion with it; and Berkeley was not long in collecting several volunteer fellow-labourers. What was more remarkable, he obtained from Sir Robert Walpole the promise of a grant of twenty thousand pounds to assist him in the work he was undertaking. In January 1729, the chivalrous enthusiast sailed for Rhode Island, where he proposed to invest a portion of his funds in land, so as to provide for the permanency of the mission. He met with a suitable tract in the interior, bought some ninety acres, and a house, and settled himself there for months, immersed in his beloved studies. He continued, however, to watch over his favourite project, until it was prematurely blighted by Walpole's unexpected refusal to advance the

money he had promised. Berkeley then returned to England early in the spring of 1734.

The fruit of his Rhode Island leisure he garnered up in his great contribution to the literature of Christian Apologetics,—*Alciphron ; or, The Minute Philosopher ; in Seven Dialogues, containing an Apology for the Christian Religion against Free Thinkers.* This able and exhaustive work recommended him to Queen Caroline, who procured the appointment of its author to the Bishopric of Cloyne. Lord Chesterfield afterwards offered him the much richer see of Clogher; but our simple-minded Christian philosopher declined any further preferment. In 1752, when he removed to Oxford to superintend the education of one of his sons, his conscientious views of the importance of episcopal duties led him to seek the exchange of his bishopric for some canonry or collegiate office at Oxford ; and when he failed in this, he asked permission to resign. The King, good-humouredly declaring that he should die a bishop, gave him permission to reside where he pleased. I conceive it to be possible that Berkeley's conscience would soon have revolted against this easy arrangement; but his sudden death (in 1753) prevented any renewal of his scruples.

Besides the works already enumerated, he wrote *The Principle and Cause of Motion* (*de Motu*), in 1721 ; *Sirius ; a Chain of Philosophical Reflections and Inquiries respecting the Virtues of Tar-water in the Plague ;* and *The Querist, containing several Queries propounded to the consideration of the Public.* Occasionally his thoughts and fancies assumed a metrical form of expression ; and one of his poems is remarkable from its distinct prevision of the great future reserved for the Western Commonwealth.

'The Muse, disgusted at an age and clime
Barren of every glorious theme,
In distant lands now waits a better time,
Producing subjects worthy fame.

In happy climes, where from the genial sun,
And virgin earth, such scenes ensue,
The force of art by Nature seems outdone,
And fancied beauties by the true :

In happy climes, the seat of innocence,
Where Nature guides and Virtue rules ;
Where men shall not impose for truth and sense,
The pedantry of courts and schools :

There shall be sung another golden age,
The rise of empire and of arts,
The good and great inspiring epic rage,
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

Not such as Europe breeds in her decay ;
Such as she bred when fresh and young,
When heavenly fame did animate her clay,
By future poets shall be sung.

Westward the course of empire takes its way ;
The four first acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day ;
Time's noblest offspring is the last.'

In the year after Queen Anne's death, Dr HUMPHREY PRIDEAUX, born in 1648, published the first part of his very useful and valuable treatise on *The Connection of the History of the Old and New Testaments ;* the second part appeared in 1717. It is still held in high estimation for the care and accuracy with which the events of the Old and New Testaments are synchronised. His *Life of Mahomet* (1697), though it has necessarily been superseded by Mure and other authorities, was a meritorious work, written with much seriousness and moderation. Prideaux was a native of Cornwall. He was educated at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford. When about thirty, he was preferred to the living of St Clement's, Oxford ; in 1681, he obtained a prebend in Norwich Cathedral : and in 1702 he was made Dean of Norwich. Scholarly studies seem favourable to longevity ; the good Dean at his death, in 1724, was seventy-six years of age.

To the reign of Queen Anne belongs the author of *The Characteristics*. 'You say,' writes the poet Gray to one of his correspondents, 'you cannot understand how Lord Shaftesbury came to be a philosopher in vogue. I will tell you. First, he was a lord; secondly, he was as vain as any of his readers; thirdly, men are very prone to believe what they do not understand; fourthly, they will believe anything at all, provided they are under no obligation to believe it; fifthly, they love to take a new road, even when that road leads nowhere; sixthly, he was reckoned a fine writer, and seems always to mean more than he said. Would you have any more reasons?' The depreciatory line which Gray here adopts is not only unjust to Shaftesbury, but unworthy of Gray himself; and one is tempted to conjecture either that Gray had not read the works he criticises, or that he had no sympathy with the weighty questions they discuss. A good deal of misapprehension prevails as to the real tendency of Shaftesbury's views. Pope declared that to his knowledge the *Characteristics* had done much harm to revealed religion; and yet nothing is more certain than that they boldly and strenuously oppose the principles of Atheism, and I do not think it can fairly be said that their author anywhere avows an antagonism to Christianity. He is not an orthodox believer; he is rather an inquirer; but then his inquiries start from the broad basis of a belief in God. His frame of mind seems to be that of a thinker who feels oppressed by the weight and gravity of the problems before him, and declines to hazard any definite solution.

But if this be his attitude upon religious, or rather let us say theological, questions, upon all points of morality his judgments are definite and firm. His system, which has been adopted and developed by Hutcheson, Reid, Dugald Stewart, and Dr Brown, recognises a natural and fundamental distinction between vice and virtue, and the existence in man of a 'moral sense' which appreciates this

distinction, and condemns or approves it independently of all considerations of self-interest. Contradicting the arguments of Hobbes, he maintains that man is so constituted as naturally to desire the cultivation of generous and unselfish affections, and to prefer all that is pure, sweet, and comely to what is harsh, corrupt, and dishonest. Conscience he defines to be a natural sense of the odiousness of crime and injustice. Just as the shapes, motions, colours, and proportions of objects presented to the eye exhibit a beauty or a deformity, according to the different measure of their several parts ; so in behaviour and actions, when presented to our understanding, there must be found, of necessity, an apparent difference, according to the regularity and irregularity of the subjects. 'The mind,' he says, 'feels the soft and harsh, the agreeable and disagreeable in the affections; and finds a foul and fair, a harmonious and a dissonant, as really and truly here as in any musical numbers, or in the outward forms or representations of sensible things. . . . However false or corrupt it be within itself, it finds the difference, as to beauty and comeliness, between one heart and another; and accordingly, in all disinterested cases, must approve in some measure of what is natural and honest, and disapprove what is dishonest and corrupt.'

Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, was born in London in 1671 ; was carefully educated ; and, like other young men of family in those days, undertook a course of Continental travel to complete the educational curriculum. In 1693 he entered the House of Commons where the sense and solidity of his occasional speeches commanded always a respectful hearing. In 1698 he spent some time in Holland, and in the society of Bayle and Leclerc pursued the philosophical speculations which were his principal delight. On succeeding to the earldom, he returned to England, and took his seat in

the House of Lords, but he never courted Parliamentary distinction, and preferred the calm pleasures of his library to 'the applause of listening senates.' A pulmonary affection compelled him, in 1712, to seek a warmer climate than England afforded, and he proceeded to Naples, where he died in February 1713, at the early age of forty-two.

His philosophical works appeared in the following order:—1. An Inquiry concerning Virtue or Merit, 1699; 2. A Letter concerning Enthusiasm, 1708; 3. Moralists: a Philosophical Rhapsody, 1709; 4. *Sensus Communis*, 1709; 5. Soliloquy: or, Advice to an Author, 1710; 6. The Judgment of Hercules; and 7. Miscellaneous Reflections. These, collected, form the well-known *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times*, published in 1716, which no student of metaphysical subjects or of English literature can afford to ignore. They are full of ingenious speculation and original reflection, embodied in language of the finest polish, harmony, and dignity. It is difficult within the narrow limits to which my survey is confined to give any fair idea of the beauty and interest of the earl's compositions; but I hazard a single extract, though it may expose me to the reproach which attached to the pedant in Hierocles when he carried away a solitary brick as a specimen of a house. Commending the pages of Shaftesbury to the thoughtful reader, without any fear that their perusal will shake his acceptance of the Christian faith, I transcribe his beautiful rhapsody on the presence of God in the universe:—

It is in vain for us to search the bulky mass of matter, seeking to know its nature; how great the whole itself, or even how small its parts. If, knowing only some of the rules of motion, we seek to trace it further, it is in vain we follow it into the bodies it has reached. Our tardy apprehensions fail us, and can reach nothing beyond the body itself, through which it is diffused. Wonderful being (if we may call it so), which bodies never receive, except from others which lose it; nor ever lose, unless by imparting it to others.

Even without change of place it has its force; and bodies big with motion labour to move, yet stir not: whilst they express an energy beyond our comprehension.

In vain too we pursue that phantom Time, too small, and yet too mighty for our grasp; when shrinking to a narrow point, it escapes our hold, or mocks our scanty thought by swelling to eternity, an object unproportioned to our capacity, as is Thy being, O thou ancient Cause, older than Time, yet young with fresh Eternity.

In vain we try to fathom the abyss of space, the seat of Thy extensive being; of which no place is empty, no void which is not full.

In vain we labour to understand that principle of sense and thought, which seeming in us to depend so much on motion, yet differs so much from it, and from matter itself, as not to suffer us to conceive how thought can ever result from this, than this aim from thought. But thought we own pre-eminent, and confess the reallest of beings; the only existence of which we are made sure of by being conscious. All else may be only dream and shadow. All which even sense suggests may be deceitful. The sense itself remains still; reason subsists; and thought maintains its eldership of being. Thus are we in a manner conscious of that original and externally existent thought, whence we derive our own. And thus the assurance we have of the existence of beings above our sense, and of Thee (the great exemplar of Thy works), comes from Thee, the all true and perfect, who hast thus communicated Thyself more immediately to us, so as in some manner to inhabit within our souls; Thou who art original soul, diffusive, vital in all, inspiriting the whole!

Christian Apologetics found a learned and moderate exponent in Dr SAMUEL CLARKE, of Norwich (1675-1729), to whose writings Pope, in his *Essay on Man*, was not inconsiderably indebted. His sermons or lectures upon *The Being and Attributes of God*, and *The Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, are still worth perusal, for the sake of the ingenious *à priori* argument for the existence of a God, which Newton originally suggested; but Clarke is now remembered chiefly by his *Defence of the Immateriality and Immortality of the Soul*. Since his time, however, scepticism has shifted its ground, and changed its mode of attack; and his writings,

valuable as they once were, are of little utility against the later forms of Agnosticism. As for the ethical system which he outlines in his papers on *The Principles of Natural Philosophy and Religion*, it may summarily be described as this:—Virtue is nothing more nor less than the ordering of our conduct in harmony with those aptitudes which we perceive in things; but this implies that we must first distinguish between what is morally good and morally evil. 'There are,' he says, 'certain necessary and eternal differences of things, and certain fitnesses or unfitnesses of the application of different things, or different relations one to another, not depending on any positive institutions, but founded unchangeably in the nature and reason of things, and unavoidably arising from the differences of the things themselves.' Clarke's works were collected and edited by Bishop Hoadley, who, while holding the see of Bangor, provoked the once-celebrated 'Bangorian Controversy,' by his sermon preached before George I. in 1717, on *The Nature of the Kingdom of Christ*, its liberality of tone drawing down on its author the thunder-bolts of the Lower House of Convocation.

In these pages it has been and is my object to keep clear of the political history of England during the reign of Anne—a web of tortuous intrigues which even the professed historian finds it difficult to unravel. I am almost debarred, therefore, from approaching Lord Bolingbroke on the most brilliant side of his character; the one by which he most deeply impressed his contemporaries, and recommended himself to the notice of posterity. For it is chiefly as the splendid, audacious, and versatile statesman, whose success was so amazing, and whose fall so complete, that he is now remembered. The romance of his career, with its startling changes and surprises, has had a strong fascination for many minds; as, for example, the late Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Lytton; and no doubt,

the English Alcibiades, as he has been called—with more appropriateness than is generally shown in the comparison of modern worthies with ancient heroes—stands out, in the drama of his time, a very conspicuous figure. Some of the interest which he excites is due, I think, to the fact that he belongs to the category of political adventurers—the *condottieri* of the senate—of whom our English history furnishes so few examples. Throughout his life he fought for his own hand; he had no fixed principles; he had no settled convictions; he was governed simply by a strenuous ambition to win the foremost place. It was right, therefore, that his fall should be as signal as was his rise. And this is the moral of his life; that even the rarest intellectual gifts, with the advantages of high rank and ancient lineage, and the happiest opportunities, are unable to secure an enduring political success or to avert defeat and disaster, without their possessor is inspired by a steadfast faith in a great cause, and an earnest purpose and desire to further the interests of his country and the welfare of mankind.

Henry St John, afterwards Lord Bolingbroke, was born at Battersea, near London, on the 1st of October 1678. His father was a baronet; his mother, the Lady Mary Rich, daughter of the Earl of Warwick. He was educated at Eton, and afterwards at Christ Church, Oxford, where he contrived to impress his contemporaries with a belief in his great abilities, though he won no university distinctions, and spent most of his time in vulgar dissipation. On his removal to London, he became at once a prominent figure in the wildest set of the young patricians of the period—boasting that he took his uncle Rochester as his model, and endeavouring to surpass him in every form of debauchery—though it is to be hoped that the story told by Goldsmith of St John and some of his boon companions running naked through the Park, was an invention or an exaggeration.

In further imitation of his uncle he dabbled a little in rhyme; but he had neither the wit nor the graceful fluency of Rochester. It is to be remembered to his honour that he befriended Dryden; and, indeed, throughout his career, his sympathy with literary men was always cordial and sincere. In 1698 and 1699, he travelled on the Continent, completing his education in the manner then approved of for young men of fashion; and it was there that he acquired his thorough mastery of the French language, so that he could speak as well as write it with fluency and exactness. He acquired also, unfortunately, an intimate acquaintance with the polite scepticism which had established itself among the people of rank and the people of letters in the Paris of Louis XIV.

On his return to London he renewed his devotion to pleasure and poetry; but in both cases, his degraded tastes led him to seek the favour of muses of abandoned character; and his most vicious verse was addressed to an orange nymph of the name of Clara, notorious for the number of her lovers. To rescue him from his career of profligacy, his friends arranged for him a marriage with a lady of good family and considerable fortune; but he proved to be irreclaimable, and his infidelities compelled his wife to separate, after many quarrels and many tears, about 1713.

His political career began in February, 1701, when he took his seat in the House of Commons as member for Wootton Bassett, a borough which for some time had been the appanage of his family. It is worth noting that his public life coincided almost exactly with the first half of the eighteenth century: he entered Parliament in 1701, and died in 1751. His clear vision detecting at once the strong position held by Robert Harley—the leader of the Tory and High Church party, and a cautious and ingenious politician,—he resolved to attach himself to his fortunes. Harley gladly accepted the aid of so dashing a recruit,

though his severe morality revolted from his licentious life; and St John plunged into the most violent partisanship with as much ardour as he had displayed in his nocturnal orgies. His attacks upon Lord Somers and the other great Whig chiefs were incessant, vehement, and successful; for he was a formidable debater, and his vigorous eloquence carried conviction to the minds of the Tory members, who heartily applauded the sweeping denunciations he levelled at his adversaries. So great was his value as an ally that, in 1704, when Harley became Secretary of State, he was brought into the Ministry as Secretary of War. For four years he remained in office, with constantly increasing reputation and influence; his brilliant rhetoric giving him a hold over the House of Commons, which was not shaken even by the general sense of his 'restlessness and recklessness;' and the energy and eloquence of his writings infusing 'a new colour and force into political literature.' In 1708, when Marlborough and Godolphin insisted upon and obtained the dismissal of Harley from office, St John. though he had always professed a great admiration of, and a deep devotion to, the famous Duke, followed his political leader, calculating astutely upon Harley's early return to office through the Queen's favour. He at the same time withdrew for a time from Parliament, until he could see with some degree of clearness what new combinations might be formed. With singular ability he employed himself in efforts to detach Marlborough from his alliance with the Whigs, holding before him as a lure, the prospects of reconciliation with his old party; so that the great Captain looked on with indifference while Anne, in 1710, threw over her Whig counsellors, and appointed in their place a Tory Ministry, with Harley and St John at its head. But no sooner were the two Ministers securely seated than they employed all their address to drive Marlborough from his command, and by a series of manœuvres unequalled for duplicity and

dexterity, succeeded in their object in 1712. With shameless ingratitude, St John led the attack against his former patron; and in the tenth number of the *Examiner*—a weekly paper supported by Atterbury, Prior, Swift, and St John himself—had published a virulent censure on the conduct of the war and the Duke of Marlborough, with a good deal of coarse invective against the Duchess. The Duke fell; was dismissed from his offices; charged with peculation, and condemned as guilty by a vote of the House of Commons. To all appearance, the position of the Tory Government henceforward was unassailable.

The removal of the great man, whom both had feared, led, however, to the eventual disruption of the alliance between Harley and St John. The former, who had been promoted to be Lord High Treasurer and Earl of Oxford, had begun, as early as February 1711, to suspect the honesty and feel jealous of the influence of his brilliant and unscrupulous colleague; whose movements he thenceforward watched with vigilant uneasiness. In the summer of 1712 St John went to the Upper House with the style and title of Viscount Bolingbroke—a grave political blunder, since it gave the post of ascendancy in the Commons into the hands of his rival, Walpole, while it did not abate the suspicions of his colleague. He himself was deeply offended because his rank in the peerage was inferior to Harley's, and because the earldom of Bolingbroke, which had formerly belonged to his family, had not been revived in his favour. He was still more keenly hurt because the Queen reserved so much of her esteem for the grave and decorous Prime Minister. Ill-will throve apace between the two statesmen, both of whom had an infinitely deeper concern for their own interests than for the national welfare. And speedily an open struggle for supremacy broke out between them, in which Harley angled for the support of the Whigs, while Bolingbroke alternately coquetted with the Jacobites and

the Hanoverians. I have already said that it is no part of my duty here to dwell on the details of these dreary intrigues—on the political craft and cunning which, in those days, passed for statesmanship. I am content to record the result in the dismissal of Oxford from the Lord Treasurership on Tuesday the 27th of July 1714. But at the very moment that supreme power passed into Bolingbroke's eager grasp, the irony of Fate had prepared his overthrow. On the 30th of July, three days after Harley's fall, the Queen was suddenly stricken with apoplexy. The Privy Council assembled immediately; and the Whig Dukes of Somerset and Argyll, entering unsummoned, took their places at the board. This was done in concert with the Duke of Shrewsbury, who, though the Tory President of the Council, was opposed to Bolingbroke, and a partisan of the House of Hanover. With a smiling and composed countenance, and rage at his heart, the Secretary was compelled to assent to the nomination of Shrewsbury as Lord Treasurer, and, proceeding to Kensington, to inform the Queen, who had rallied from the immediate effects of the seizure, of the decision of the Council; worse still—to see her, with tremulous hand, give the white staff into Shrewsbury's charge, bidding him use it for the good of her people. It was a fatal blow to all his brilliant schemes of ambition. So he sat down to write to Swift, with a conciseness which witnesses to the restraint put upon his feelings,—'The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday; the Queen died on Sunday. What a world is this! and how does Fortune banter us!' He held his ground for some months with a good deal of courage; but having been impeached for his share in negotiating the Treaty of Utrecht, he acted upon Falstaff's maxim, and effected his escape to France in March 1715.

Soon after his arrival in that country he offered his services to the Pretender. They were accepted; he was

appointed Secretary of State, and was quickly immersed in the secret combinations and intrigues which his fertile and ingenious intellect enjoyed. All his efforts were directed to secure the support of Louis and his Ministers in active measures for the restoration of James to his father's throne. There seemed at one time a good prospect of success; but again death baffled the ambitious statesman, and with the accession of Louis XV., he felt that the Jacobite cause was lost. His restless spirit then endeavoured to placate the English Government, but his offences had been heavy, and he fretted through seven weary years before he obtained permission to return to England. The permission was then purchased, it is said, by a bribe of eleven thousand pounds to the King's mistress, the Duchess of Kendal. He was not allowed, however, to resume his seat in the House of Lords, the Ministry not choosing, perhaps, to place so formidable an orator on such a platform of vantage. His energies, however, found another channel for their exercise. At Dawley, near Uxbridge, he led the life of a country gentleman; farming and planting and laying out his grounds with all the ardour he had displayed in supplanting Harley. It was a pleasant ride thence to Twickenham, where he could enjoy the society of Pope and his friends. And at Dawley, in 1726, he received as a guest the most brilliant Frenchman of the time, Voltaire.

He could not abstain from politics wholly, however, and took a leading part *ab extrâ* in organising a compact and strong opposition to Walpole's Government, which he vehemently attacked in the pages of *The Craftsman*. At the same time, through the Duchess of Kendal, he contrived to secure the favour of George I. to such an extent that his hopes of a return to power were not wholly chimerical. But for a third time death foiled him in his ambitious schemes. George II. was governed by his able and sagacious wife, who gave all her confidence and sup

port to Walpole ; and Bolingbroke, burying himself anew in the seclusion of Dawley, appeared wholly devoted to potatoes, philosophy, and poetry.

In 1735, Bolingbroke suddenly quitted England, and remained abroad, with the exception of occasional visits, for nearly seven years, practising an economy very uncongenial to his temperament, but rendered imperative by his reckless extravagance. On the death of his father, in 1742, he succeeded to the family estates, returned to England, and took up his residence at Battersea. Here, after so long buffeting with the storms of public life, he might have been expected to feel the happiness of repose, and to rejoice that his days were to end in peace under the roof of his ancestors. By the old church, which he could not enter without seeing before him the large window emblazoned with all the heraldic glories of the St Johns, the arms of England in the centre, and the whole supported by portraits of Margaret Beauchamp, Henry VII., and Queen Elizabeth ; and in the old house, with the green terrace before it, which looked so pleasantly on the broad and tranquil river, as it flowed down to the great metropolis, here he had at last found his home. Ambition and philosophy, however, had destroyed in his mind those associations which throw a halo over the past, ennoble the present, and brighten the future. The traditions of the past spoke to him in vain ; disappointments embittered the passing hours. In the future, of which the old church, where the remains of his family were lying, a mere stepping-stone from his door, was the symbol, he had ceased to believe. He tried to seek comfort in his cold dreary First Philosophy, and sought it in vain.

At first he found occupation in the political contentions of the day, and amusement in the conversation of Marchmont and Lyttelton, the silver-tongued Murray, Chesterfield, Stair, and William Pitt. Then he turned to literary labours, publishing his gloomy *Reflections on the*

State of England; and, under the title of *Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism*, his essay on that subject; his *Remarks on the State of Parties at the Accession of George I.*, and his *Patriot King* (originally written for Frederick, Prince of Wales). Their revision he entrusted to David Mallet, the Scotchman, whom, by his will, he entrusted with the publication of all his manuscripts. Rheumatism and gout afflicted him greatly in the last years of his life; and he was much shaken by the death of his wife—his second wife, a niece of Madame de Maintenon—in March 1750. He did not long survive her. A cancerous affection of the jaw carried him off on the 12th of December 1751.

Mallet fulfilled the trust reposed in him by giving to the world, in 1754, a collected edition of his patron's works, in which were included his hitherto unpublished philosophical essays. Their infidel character provoked a very general feeling of disgust. Why, it was said, had he withheld the candid profession of such opinions until it was impossible for their author to be confronted with the defenders of the faith they assailed? 'Having loaded a blunderbuss, and pointed it against Christianity,' said Dr Johnson, 'he had not the courage to discharge it himself, but left half-a-crown to a hungry Scotchman to pull the trigger after his death.' The blunderbuss, however, was not of very heavy calibre, nor was it skilfully pointed. It missed fire; and Christianity was none the worse for the futile explosion.

Bolingbroke is seen at his best, I think, in his *Letter to Sir William Wyndham* (1752), which may be described as a chapter of autobiographical apologetics. But is he read now-a-days? Is he worth reading (except, of course, to the historical student)? His admirers are obliged to concede that, if he be read, it must be for the *manner* not the *matter*, the *style* not the *thought;* for his historical essays are 'thin' in the extreme; his idea of 'a Patriot King' is simply that of a patriarchal despot; and his

attacks on Christianity would win no approving smile from a modern agnostic. As for his philosophy, you will find it in its most agreeable form in Pope's *Essay on Man*. I am not sure that there is very much even in his style. It is unrelieved by felicitous images, and is seldom enriched by happy terms of expression; all that can be said of it is, that it flows easily and clearly, like a pellucid but shallow stream; that in attack it is generally animated, and in defence often dignified. As a man of letters, Bolingbroke owed his whilom reputation to his conspicuousness as a statesman; and as a statesman his influence largely depended. I think, on the attractiveness of his brilliant, restless, wayward, and ambitious personality. He seems to have been admired as a great man by his contemporaries, because, perhaps, they came under his immediate influences,—we who coldly criticise him, at the distance of a century and a half, and are free from this influence, feel tempted to wonder that in the history of his time he made so considerable a figure.

Women did not play a very important part, or aspire to a very high place, in the literature of the Augustan age. Mrs Manley in the department of fiction—Mrs Centlivre in the drama—and Lady MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU in the epistolary art—*voilà tous*. Can I legitimately claim the last-named as belonging to the reign of Queen Anne? Truth to tell, she was scarcely twenty-four when the good Queen died, and she lived nearly half a century after that event; but she undoubtedly felt the influence of the literary school which had its origin in the reign of 'the last of the Stuarts,' and in tone and style and form, so to speak, bears its hall-mark most conspicuously. In all respects she was a notable woman, and I am not sorry for an excuse to direct the reader's attention towards her character, attainments, and achievements.

She came, of course, of an ancient family; the purest

of blue blood flowed in her veins. Her father was Evelyn Pierrepoint, Marquis of Dorchester and Earl of Kingston, afterwards Duke of Kingston, and her mother, Lady Mary Fielding, daughter of William, Earl of Denbigh. The date of her birth was 1690, its place, Thoresby-in-Sherwood, Nottinghamshire. Her mother died when she was four years old; but her father took charge of her education, affectionately and carefully applying himself to the cultivation of her talents. He was not less proud of her personal charms than of her intellectual gifts. It is said that, on one occasion, at a meeting of the Kit Cat Club, after listening to the applausive 'toasts' of the beauties of the season, he sprang to his feet and proposed the health of his daughter, Lady Mary (then in her eighth or ninth year), as *la plus belle des belles*. Some of the members declined, on the ground that the rules of the club prevented them from honouring a lady whom they had never seen. 'Then you shall see her,' was the reply, and he sent directions that she should be dressed and brought to him at the Club. On her arrival she was received with a tumultuous welcome, and her claim being fully endorsed, her health went merrily round, to an accompaniment of 'three times three.'

In illustration of the scope of Lady Mary's education, we may mention that it included Latin and Greek and mathematics; though she owed her vast stores of information to her incessant miscellaneous reading. She devoured every book which came within her reach; fiction, history, biography, theology; and from each she learned something. But it was only her leisure which could be given to these delightful pursuits. Riding and dancing were in Queen Anne's days indispensable accomplishments; and Lady Mary was also required to direct her father's establishment at Thoresby. As soon as she was strong enough—and physical strength was a necessary qualification for the post—she presided at the

Marquis's table. The mistress of a country-house had not only to persuade and provoke her guests to eat voraciously, but to carve every dish on which their choice fell, with her own hands. The higher her rank, the more incumbent upon her was this sacred duty. Each joint was placed before her in turn, to be operated upon by her alone. The nobles and squires on either hand were not supposed or desired to offer any assistance. The master of the house, seated opposite to her, looked on indifferently ; his sole function was to push the bottle after dinner. As for the crowd of guests who sat below the salt, the most inconsiderable among them, the squire's younger brother, the chaplain who mumbled prayers and took the vacant hand at whist, the curate in rusty cassock from the neighbouring village, or the subaltern from the nearest military station, if suffered through her neglect to help himself to a slice of the mutton that steamed at his end of the board, would have digested it as an affront, and gone home in dudgeon, half inclined to vote the wrong way at the next election. No wonder, in these circumstances, that young ladies took lessons from competent masters in the art—or science—of carving, as Lady Mary did, three times a week. On her father's state occasions, the hapless Lady Mary was compelled to dine by herself an hour or two before the ceremonial function, in order that all her attention might be given to her onerous task. Alas for Lady Mary! *Diners à la Russe* were not then invented.

Among Lady Mary's friends and correspondents were Mistress Smith, the beautiful daughter of the Whig Speaker, and maid of honour to Queen Anne ; the charming Lady Walpole, sister of the future Prime Minister ; the famous heiress, Lady Anne Vaughan, the only child of Lord Carberry, and last direct representative of a family honourably distinguished for urbanity and munificence; and, more particularly, young Mistress Anne Wortley Montagu, to whom she addressed her earliest extant

letters. That she speedily acquired a proficiency in that art of epistolary composition, which our forefathers so highly esteemed, will be gathered from the following letter, dated the 8th of August 1709, which, however, is not less noteworthy for its matter than its manner:—

'I shall run mad,' she says; 'with what heart can people write, when they believe their letters will never be received? I have already writ you a very long scrawl, but it seems it never came to your hands; I cannot bear to be accused of coldness by one whom I shall love all my life. This will, perhaps, miscarry as the last did; how unfortunate am I if it does! You will think I forgot you, who are never out of my thoughts. You will fancy me stupid enough to neglect your letters, when they are the only pleasures of my solitude: in short you will call me ungrateful and insensible, when I esteem you as I ought, in esteeming you above all the world. If I am not quite so unhappy as I imagine, and you do receive this, let me know it as soon as you can, for till then I shall be in terrible uneasiness; and let me beg you for the future, if you do not receive letters very constantly from me, imagine the post-boy killed, imagine the mail burnt, or some other strange accident; you can imagine nothing so impossible as that I forget you, my dear Mrs Wortley. I know no pretence I have to your good opinion, but by heartily desiring it; I wish I had that imagination you talk of, to render me a fitting correspondent for you, who can write so well on every thing. I am now so much alone, I have leisure to pass whole days in reading, but am not at all proper for so delicate an employment as choosing you books. Your own fancy will better direct you. My study at present is nothing but dictionaries and grammars. I am trying whether it be possible to learn without a master; I am not certain (I dare hardly hope) I shall make any great progress; but I find the study so diverting, I am not only easy, but pleased with the solitude that indulges it. I forget there is such a place as London, and wish for no company but yours. You see, my dear, in making my pleasures consist of these unfashionable diversions, I am not of the number who cannot be easy out of the mode. I believe more follies are committed out of complaisance to the world, than in following our own inclinations. Nature is seldom in the wrong, custom always; it is with some regret I follow it in all the impertinences of dress; the complaisance is so trivial, that it comforts me; but I am amazed to see it consulted even in the most important occasions of our lives; and that people of good sense in

other things, can make their happiness consist in the opinions of others, and sacrifice everything in the desire of appearing in fashion. I call all people who fall in love with furniture, or clothes, and equipage, of this number, and I look upon them as no less in the wrong, than when they were five years old, and doated on shells, pebbles, and hobby-horses. I believe you will expect this letter to be dated from the other world, for sure I am you never heard an inhabitant of this talk so before. I suppose you expect, too, I should conclude with begging pardon for this extreme, tedious, and very nonsensical letter ; quite contrary, I think you will be obliged to me for it. I could not better show my great concern for your reproaching me with a neglect I know myself innocent of, than proving myself mad in these pages.'

Mistress Wortley had a brother named Edward, who, in spite of the common representation of him as a phlegmatic and morose country gentleman of bucolic tastes and ordinary parts, seems to have been really endowed with very considerable abilities, which he had cultivated with equal success and assiduity. He had a clear, sound judgment, and a strong understanding. For the frivolous pursuits of the fine gentleman of his day, Mr Wortley Montagu cherished a superb disdain, based partly on superior refinement, and partly on intense egotism. He wrote verse ; he dabbled in the *belles lettres ;* he affected the society of Congreve, Addison, Steele, and the genial Garth. There was a good deal of the misogynist about him, as is always the case with egoists ; the two vices springing from the same moral and intellectual defects. Naturally, a man who could play cards for long hours consecutively, who was an adept in the scandal of the hour, would care little for the company of *le beau sexe.* But lounging one day in his sister's boudoir, he was introduced to her friend and visitor, Lady Mary Pierrepoint. Her beauty he was constrained to acknowledge at the first glance ; that this was the least of her attractions he was ready to own after an animated conversation. For here was a woman who understood Latin, and had translated Epictetus ; a woman who had

opinions, and expressed them in English not less accurate than lively. His delight was equal to his astonishment. Finding that her classical reading had not included Quintus Curtius—an author who is probably omitted even from the curriculum of Girton and Newnham—he sent her a 'superb edition' a few days afterwards, with these lines inscribed upon the fly-leaf:—

> 'Beauty like this had vanquished Persia shown,
> The Macedon had laid his empire down,
> And polished Greece obeyed a barb'rous throne.
> Had wit so bright adorned a Grecian dame,
> The am'rous youth had lost his thirst for fame,
> Nor distant India sought through Syria's plain;
> But to the Muses' shame with her had run,
> And thought her lover more than Ammon's son.'

Admit that a love-story which begins with 'Quintus Curtius' and an elaborate compliment in heroic couplets is no everyday matter! The heart of young Mr Montagu seems to have been really moved; his fancy developed into a genuine passion; and he sought every opportunity of impressing his sincerity upon Lady Mary. He was fortunate in having the support of his sister's good offices; she pressed his suit with as much earnestness as if she had changed her sex, and been wooing for herself. To maintain a man's love at a proper degree of fervour, a little jealousy is indispensable, and this ingredient, if we may judge from the following letter, does not seem to have been wholly wanting:—

'My dear Mrs Wortley,' writes the young beauty, September 5th, 1709, 'you have read that a man who, with patience, hears himself called heretic, can never be esteemed a good Christian. To be capable of preferring the despicable wretch you mention to Mr Wortley, is as ridiculous—if not as criminal—as forsaking the Deity to worship a calf. Don't tell me anybody ever had so mean an opinion of my inclinations; 'tis among the number of those things I would forget. My tenderness is always built upon my esteem, and when the foundation perishes, it falls.'

Mrs Wortley replies in language which was evidently dictated by her brother; for it is barely possible to believe that one woman, in writing to another, would inform her that she could no more utter a dull thought than put on a look that was not beautiful, or would gravely assure her that she was 'altogether perfect.' And though in the following eulogium we see the hand (writing) of the sister, we distinctly hear the voice of the brother:—

'"Tis to this happy disposition of being pleased with a variety of new objects that we owe that wit of yours, which is so surprising; and to this alone I am indebted for the irrepressible delight in the present enjoyment of your favour; and it would be extravagant in me to call it either your fault or my misfortune. I wish the most happy person now in being [her brother], whom I have often discovered to be so, in spite of your art to hide it, may be as able to make this reflection at the Nottingham race as I, who am not subdued by so strong a passion of that sort. . . . Such passions as these, where there is an object like Lady Mary, leave no room for cool reflections; and I wish he may not be so far overcome by his fears for the future, as to forget what a favourite of fortune he is in the present possession of so great a bliss.'

As the tide of true love flowed with so free a course, Lady Mary's attention was not wholly diverted from her favourite studies. In June 1710, she sent a translation of *Epictetus* to Bishop Burnet, accompanying it with a letter which is in every way remarkable. Certainly, few women of her time, and perhaps none at twenty years of age, could have written with so much discrimination and sagacity, or with such terseness of expression; and it would be difficult to point to any whose views of female education were so advanced and so comprehensive.

'My sex,' she writes, 'is usually forbid studies of this nature, and folly reckoned so much our proper sphere that we are sooner pardoned any excesses of that, than the least pretensions to reading or good sense. We are permitted no books but such as tend to the weakening and effeminating the mind. Our natural defects are every way indulged, and it is looked upon as in a degree criminal to improve our reason, or fancy we have any. We are taught to place all our art

in adorning our outward forms, and permitted, without reproach, to carry that custom even to extravagancy, while our minds are entirely neglected, and, by disuse of reflection, filled with nothing but the trifling objects our eyes are daily entertained with. This custom, so long established and industriously upheld, makes it more ridiculous to go out of the common road, and forces one to find as many excuses, as if it were a thing altogether criminal, not to play the fool in concert with other women of quality, whose birth and leisure only serve to render them the most useless and most worthless part of the creation. There is hardly a character in the world more despicable, or more liable to universal ridicule, than that of a learned woman; these words imply, according to the received sense, a talking, impertinent, vain, and conceited creature. I believe that nobody will deny that learning may have this effect, but it must be a very superficial degree of it. Erasmus was certainly a man of great learning, and good sense, and he seems to have my opinion of it when he says,—"*Fœmina quæ vere sapit non videtur sibi sapere; contrà, quæ cum nihil sapiat sibi videtur sapere, ea domum bis stulta est.*"'

If some of Lady Mary's contemporaries of her own sex could have written in a style as scholarly, and have laid claim to an equal acquaintance with Latin and Greek, none, I am sure, could have written more sagely, or with a juster conception of woman's reasonable rights and true sphere of action. No doubt, we must look for the clue to much that in her later life was apparently unconventional and perplexing—much that was wayward in conduct and audacious in expression—to this attitude of hostility which at the outset she assumed to the old traditional notion of the inferiority of woman. Throughout her career, she was the champion—to some extent the martyr—of her sex. Her strong intellect, which, under happier conditions, might have expanded into genius, rebelled against the social tyranny that restricted woman to the narrowest possible circle of occupations, that degraded her into the slave of fashion, that made her (as we see her in the prose of Addison and the poetry of Pope) a thing to be admired, caressed, and gently ridiculed. In this respect she was in advance of her age; and hence, perhaps, much

of the calumny and contumely with which the age loaded her. On the other hand, Lady Mary would never have been found on the same platform with recent loud-tongued advocates of 'Woman's Rights,' whose brazen eloquence has affronted the public. She writes to Bishop Burnet:—

'I am not now arguing for an equality of the two sexes. I do not doubt but that God and nature have thrown us into an inferior rank; we are a lower part of the creation; we owe obedience and submission to the superior sex, and any woman who suffers her vanity and folly to deny this, rebels against the law of the Creator and indisputable order of nature; but there is a worse effect than this, which follows the careless education given to women of quality, its being so easy for any man of sense, that finds it either his interest or his pleasure, to corrupt them. The common method is to begin by attacking their religion; they bring them a thousand fallacious arguments, while their excessive ignorance hinders them from replying; and, I speak now from my own knowledge and conversation among them, there are more Atheists among the fine ladies than the loosest sort of rakes; and the same ignorance that generally works out into excess of superstition, exposes them to the snare of any who have a fancy to carry them to t'other extreme.'

Mistress, or Miss, Mary Wortley died in 1710, and thenceforth Lady Mary and her lover were constrained to adopt a direct mode of correspondence. The death of the sister had, however, an unfavourable effect on the brother's suit. Unbiassed by the influence of her friend, Lady Mary was able to examine more impartially her lover's disposition and the state of her own heart, and came to the conclusion that she esteemed and respected Mr Montagu, but did not love him; and that there were points in both their characters which were opposed to their happiness in the intimacy of the married life. Mr Montagu's letters show that his attachment was unmistakably genuine; in fact, its fervour frequently stimulated outbreaks of irritability and jealousy. Lady Mary's are much colder in tone and more constrained in expression: they are not the utterances of a loving heart. No wonder, therefore, that this

strong-minded woman and this man of capacity and culture quarrelled about trifles like any Brown, Jones, or Robinson; but though they were constantly threatening to renounce their pledges, they invariably ended in a more or less sincere reconciliation.

A specimen of Lady Mary's love-letters (if such they can fairly be called) must be commended to the reader's curiosity:—

'I intended,' she writes, 'to make no answer to your letter; it was something very ungrateful, and I resolved to give over all thoughts of you. I could easily have performed that resolve some time ago, but then you took pains to please me; now you have brought me to esteem you. You make use of that esteem to give me uneasiness, and I have the displeasure of seeing I esteem a man that dislikes me. Farewell, then, since you will have it so; I renounce all the ideas I have so long flattered myself with, and will entertain my fancy no longer with the imaginary pleasure of pleasing you. How much wiser are all those women I have despised than myself! In placing their happiness in trifles, they have placed it in what is attainable. I fondly thought fine clothes and gilt coaches, balls, operas, and public adoration rather the fatigues of life; and that true happiness was justly defined by Mr Dryden (pardon the romantic air of repeating verses) when he says,—

> "Whom Heav'n would bless it does from pomp remove,
> And makes their wealth in privacy and love."

These notions had corrupted my judgment as much as Mrs Biddy Tipkins'. According to this scheme, I proposed to pass my life with you. I yet do you the justice to believe if any man could have been contented with this manner of living, it would have been you. Your indifference to me does not hinder me from thinking you capable of tenderness and the happiness of friendship; but I find it is not in me you'll ever have them; you think me all that is detestable; you accuse me of want of sincerity and generosity. To convince you of your mistake, I'll show you the last extremes of both.

'While I foolishly fancied you loved me (which, I confess, I had never any great reason for, more than that, I wished it), there is no condition of life I could not have been happy in with you, so very much I liked you—I might say loved, since it is the last thing I'll ever say to you. This is telling you sincerely my greatest weakness; and now I

will oblige you with a new proof of generosity. I'll never see you more. I shall avoid all public places, and this is the last letter I shall send. If you write, be not displeased if I send it back unopened. I shall force my obligations to oblige yours, and remember then you have told me I could not oblige you more than by refusing you. Had I intended ever to see you again, I durst not have sent this letter.'

The reader will probably be of opinion that she would not have written this letter had she *not* intended 'to see him again.' In its polished phrases and elegantly-turned periods, no sign is visible of a wounded pride or rejected love. There is no *passion* in it; of 'head' there is enough, but no 'heart.' It is the letter of a clever woman who admires, perhaps esteems, the man to whom she writes; does not wish to lose him, yet cares very little about retaining him; is conscious she does not love him, and yet feels a certain attraction towards him. True passion is not so solicitous about the turn of a sentence or the choice of an epithet. The thought has often occurred to me, when reading the literature of the Augustan period, whether the blood ran as warmly in the veins of our ancestors as it does in our own, whether the heart was ever allowed to follow its own impulses, and whether love in the days of good Queen Anne was ever anything more than a stage-play or a pretty pastoral. We must go elsewhere to convince ourselves that our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers loved and hated, were jealous and revengeful, faithful and unfaithful, much as we do and are. After all, it is not the passion that changes, but the expression of it.

We turn now to see what part in this genteel comedy of manners was played by Mr Montagu. Let us glance at one of the letters he addressed to his capricious beauty. Perhaps he sprang from an uneasy couch after a night of pain and perplexity—for it is dated 'Saturday Morning'—to compose it, and relieve his feelings, as so many of us have done, through the convenient media of pen, ink and paper:—

Every time you see me gives me a fresh proof of your not caring for me; yet I beg you will meet me once more. How could you pay me that great compliment of your loving the country for life, when you would not stay with me a few minutes longer? Who is the happy man you went to? I agree with you, I am often so dull I cannot explain my meaning; but will not own that the expression was so very obscure, when I said if I had you I should act against my opinion. Why, need I add, I see what is best for me. I condemn what I do, and yet I fear I must do it. If you can't find it out that you are going to be unhappy, ask your sister, who agrees with you in everything else, and she will convince you of your rashness in this. She knows you don't care for me, and that you will like me less and less every year—perhaps every day of your life. You may, with a little care, please another as well, and make him less timorous. It is possible I too may please some of those that have but little acquaintance; and if I should be preferred by a woman for being the first among her companions, it would give me as much pleasure as if I were the first man in the world. Think again, and prevent a misfortune from falling on both of us.

When you are at leisure I shall be as ready to end all as I was last night, when I disobliged one that will do me hurt, by crossing his desires, rather than fail of meeting you. Had I imagined you would have left me without finishing, I had not seen you. Now you have been so free before Mrs Steele [the 'dear Prue' of our beloved Dicky Steele, of *Tatler* and *Spectator* renown], you may call upon her, or send for her to-morrow or next day. Let her dine with you, or go to visit shops, Hyde Park, or other diversions. You may bring her home. I can be in the house reading, as I often am, though the master is abroad. If you will have her visit you first, I will get her to go to-morrow. I think a man or a woman is under no engagement till the writings are sealed; but it looks like indiscretion even to begin a treaty without a probability of concluding it. When you hear of all my objections to you, and to myself, you will resolve against me. Last night you were much upon the reserve; I see you can never be thoroughly intimate with me. 'Tis because you have no pleasure in it. You can be easy and complaisant, as you have sometimes told me; but never think that enough to make me easy unless you refuse me.

Write a line this evening, or early to-morrow. If I don't speak plain, do you understand what I write? Tell me how to mend the style, if the fault is in that. If the characters are not plain, I can easily mend them. I always comprehend your expressions, but would give a great deal to know what passes in your heart.

In you I might possess youth, beauty, and all things that can charm. It is possible that they might strike me less, after a time; but I may then consider I have once enjoyed them in perfection; that they would have decayed as soon in any other. You see this is not your case. You will think you might have been happier. Never engage with a man unless you propose to yourself the highest satisfaction from him and none other.

I think I perceive a strain of genuine feeling in this letter; though I must own that it leaves upon my mind a disagreeable impression. The writer reveals a certain moroseness of disposition, or, to speak more plainly, a churlishness, which may have suggested to Lady Mary an apprehension of future unhappiness. But would anyone of us appear to advantage, I wonder, if our love-letters rose out of the dust of the long-ago, and offered themselves to the cold critical gaze of the public? We too, have had —have we not?—our fits of jealousy and suspicion when Phyllis smiled for a moment upon Alexis, or turned her tiny shell-like ear to the inane whispers of Corydon. For myself, I think it is unwise for men and women to preserve these missives when the glow of youthful passion has faded out of them, and they are as cold as the ashes of long-extinct fires. Let us yield them up as a votive sacrifice to the illusions of the irrecoverable Past. The love-letters of to-day, however, are couched in a strain of language differing vastly from that of the *billets* of the beaux and belles who met and parted, wooed and married, in the reign of good Queen Anne. Our epistolary style has grown as negligent as our garb. Perhaps there is a mysterious relation between them. Is it too fanciful to conjecture that a man in a shooting-jacket and knickerbockers will necessarily write with a good deal of ease and freedom? I declare for my own part that if I wanted to imitate the aristocratical style and elaborate composition of the Montagues and the Herveys, I should first encase my nether limbs in breeches and silk stockings, adorn my wrists with ruffles of Mechlin lace, and don a Steinkirk

cravat and a Ramillies wig! However this may be, I doubt whether many people of the present day write love-letters so well worth reading as those of Lady Mary and her suitor.

The following letter from Lady Mary carries us forward another stage in the long courtship. It is without date, but must have been written towards the close of 1711; that is, after Mr Montagu, having been accepted by her, had addressed himself to her father. At first, the Marquis received him very graciously, but when the settlements came to be considered, he changed his tone.

The practice of 'a man's entailing his estate upon his eldest son while as yet an unborn child' had been ridiculed with much vigour by the wits of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator;* and Mr Wortley, who had adopted the opinions of his friends, firmly refused to settle, as the Marquis required, his landed property upon a son who, for all he knew, might prove wholly unworthy of it. On the other hand, Lord Dorchester contemptuously dismissed the reforming zeal of his would-be son-in-law by declaring that *his* grandchildren should not incur the risk of being left beggars; and he commanded his daughter to smile upon another and more tractable suitor, who was willing to accept her father's conditions, and to lay himself and his fortune at her feet.

Such were the circumstances under which Lady Mary wrote to Mr Montagu as follows:—

I would see you if I could (though perhaps it may be wrong); but, in the way that I am here, 'tis impossible. I can't come to town, but in company with my sister-in-law; I can carry her nowhere but where she pleases; or, if I could, I would trust her with nothing. I could not walk out alone, without giving suspicion to the whole family; should I be watched, and seen to meet a man—judge of the consequences!

You speak of treating with my father, as if you believed he would come to terms afterwards. I will not suffer you to remain in the thought, however advantageous it might be to me; I will deceive

you in nothing. I am fully persuaded he will never hear of terms afterwards. You may say, 'tis talking oddly of him. I can't answer to that; but 'tis my real opinion, and I think I know him. You talk to me of estates as if I was the most interested woman in the world. Whatever faults I may have shown in my life, I know not one action of it that ever proved me mercenary. I think there cannot be a greater proof to the contrary than my treating with you when I am to depend entirely upon your generosity, at the same time that I may have settled upon me five hundred pounds per annum, pin-money, and a considerable jointure, in another place, not to reckon that I may have by his temper what command of his estate I please; and with you I have nothing to pretend to. I do not, however, make a merit to you; money is very little to me, because all beyond necessaries I do not value, that is to be purchased by it. If the man proposed to me had ten thousand pounds per annum, and I was sure to dispose of it all, I should act just as I do. I have in my life known a good deal of show, and never found myself the happier for it.

From this plain-spoken avowal I infer that Lady Mary's attachment to her suitor had been somewhat strengthened by her father's opposition; but she never allowed her judgment to be overpowered by her feelings, and argued and reasoned with a calmness which Mr Wortley no doubt found sufficiently provoking. Thus she pursues the even tenor of her way as follows:—

'If we marry, our happiness must consist in loving one another; 'tis principally my concern to think of the most probable method of making that love eternal.' [It is seldom, indeed, that Lady Mary condescends to such a stroke of sentiment!] 'You object against living in London; I am not fond of it myself, and readily give it up to you; though I am assured there needs more art to keep a fondness alive in solitude, where it generally preys upon itself. There is one article absolutely necessary—to be ever beloved, one must be ever agreeable. There is no such thing as being agreeable without a thorough good humour, a natural sweetness of temper, enlivened by cheerfulness. Whatever natural funds of gaiety one is born with, 'tis necessary to be entertained with agreeable objects. Anybody capable of tasting pleasure, when they confine themselves to one place, should take care 'tis the place in the world the most agreeable. Whatever you may now think (now, perhaps, you have some fondness for me), though your love should continue in its full force, there are times when the most beloved mistress would be troublesome. People

are not for ever (nor is it in human nature that they should be) disposed to be fond ; you would be glad to find in me the friend and the companion.'

Ignoring the fond lover's rapturous idea of marriage as an elysium, Lady Mary proceeds to assume the attitude of the social essayist. The following passage reads like an excerpt from one of the hebdomadal moralists which had just been created for the delight of good society :—

Very few people that have settled entirely in the country but have grown at length weary of one another. The lady's conversation generally falls into a thousand impertinent effects of idleness : and the gentleman falls in love with his dogs and his horses, and *out* of love with everything else. I am not now arguing in favour of the town ; you have answered me as to that point. In respect of your health, 'tis the first thing to be considered, and I shall never ask you to do anything injurious to that. But 'tis my opinion 'tis necessary to be happy, that we, neither of us, think any place more agreeable than that where we are.

The letter concludes in a somewhat different, but equally artificial strain :—

If 'tis necessary for your affairs to stay in England to assist your father in his business ; as I suppose the time will be short, I would be as little injurious to your fortune as I can, and I will do it. But I am still of opinion nothing is so likely to make us both happy as what I propose. I foresee I may break with you on this point, and I shall certainly be displeased with myself for it, and wish a thousand times that I had done whatever you pleased ; but, however, I hope I shall always remember how much more miserable than anything else would make me, should I be to live with you, and to please you no longer. You can be pleased with nothing when you are not pleased with your wife. One of the *Spectators* is very just that says, 'A man ought always to be upon his guard against spleen and a too severe philosophy ; a woman against levity and coquetry.' If we go to Naples, I will make no acquaintance there of any kind, and you will be in a place where a variety of agreeable objects will dispose you to be ever pleased. If such a thing is possible, this will secure me everlasting happiness ; and I am ready to wait on you without leaving a thought behind me.

There seemed little probability, however, that Lady

Mary would be in a position to carry out her theory of conjugal felicity. Her father was resolute in his objection to a son-in-law who might cut off his (the Marquis's) grandson with a shilling; Lady Mary in her refusal to accept a suitor for whom she did not entertain the slightest esteem. Indignant at her presumption in selecting a husband for herself, the Marquis coldly informed her that unless she acquiesced in his more prudent choice, he would not give her a single sixpence for her dowry. She then announced her resolution not to marry at all; but this declaration the Marquis met with an intimation that she would at once be 'interned' (as the French say) in some remote part of the country for the remainder of his life, and that at his death she would be limited to a very small annuity. Fathers in those days calculated on filial obedience; and in the belief that she would refrain from further opposition to his wishes, he proceeded to complete the preparations for her marriage. The day was fixed; the settlements were drawn up and signed; the wedding clothes were purchased; when Lady Mary brought the comedy to an abrupt conclusion by eloping with Mr Montagu, to whom she was privately married by special licence, on the 12th of August 1712.

I leave the reader to imagine the Marquis of Dorchester's sublime rage. But a curious circumstance has to be recorded. Lady Frances Pierrepoint, apparently afraid lest her august father should be tempted to examine her sister's papers, and suspecting that he might find matter among them which would add fuel to his wrath, hastily burned all she could lay her hands upon, including a diary which Lady Mary had kept for some years, and was reluctant to lose. One cannot help wondering what a daughter could write that her father ought not to see? Is it possible that she had ventured to criticise the Marquis himself, with that vivacious and courageous pen she so well knew how to use?

Soon after her marriage she resumed the habit of diary-keeping. In the course of years she filled many volumes, which eventually passed into the possession of Lady Bute, her daughter, and were kept jealously under lock and key. Sometimes she would read passages aloud to her daughters and friends; but she could never be persuaded to spare them out of her own hands, or to publish them. Towards the close of her life she acted on an oft-expressed intention, and solemnly burned the diary — an Erastotratus-like act, which inflicted upon posterity a grievous injury. It is impossible not to regret the loss of such valuable *Memoirs pour servir*, when we read that they comprised the years immediately following Lady Mary's marriage, 1713, 1714, 1715, years full of incident, and also the time of Mr Montagu's embassy to Constantinople. What passed every day was duly set down; often only in a line or half a line, as thus—'Stayed at home alone; went to such a place; saw such a person'—so that frequently three or four weeks took up but a single page. Sometimes again, an occurrence or a conversation would be given at very great length; sometimes despatched with one sharp sentence, like the following humorous application of a speech in Dryden's *Spanish Friar*: 'Lady Hinchinbroke has a dead daughter—it were unchristian not to be sorry for my cousin's misfortune; but if she has no live son, Mr Wortley is heir—so there's comfort for a Christian.' Unquestionably we could have better spared many better books than our Lady Mary's diary.

How Mr Montagu and his charming but imperious bride spent their honeymoon we shall never know—all through the ill-advised squeamishness of Lady Bute. Mr Montagu, however, seems soon to have been called to London by his Parliamentary duties; and his young wife, instead of accompanying him, went on a visit to some friends at Walling Wells, in Nottinghamshire. A letter

which from thence she addressed to her husband, retains the liveliness of her former correspondence, but breathes a spirit of deeper and more genuine regard, which leads us to hope that no cloud obscured the serenity of the honey-moon :—

I have not been very long in this family ; and I fancy myself in that described in the *Spectator*. The good people here look upon their children with a fondness that more than recompenses their care of them. I don't perceive much distinction in regard to their merits ; and when they speak sense or nonsense, it affects the parents with almost the same pleasure. My friendship for the mother, and kindness for Miss Biddy, make me endure the squalling of Miss Nanny and Miss Mary with abundance of patience ; and my foretelling the future conquests of the eldest daughter makes me very well with the family. I don't know whether you will presently find out, that this seeming impertinent account is the tenderest expression of my love to you. But it furnishes my imagination with agreeable pictures of our future life ; and I flatter myself with the hopes of one day enjoying with you the same satisfaction ; and that, after as many years together, I may see you retain the same fondness for me as I shall certainly do for you, when the noise of a nursery may have more charms for us than the music of an opera.

Amusements such as these are the sure effect of my sincere love, since 'tis the nature of the passion to entertain the mind with pleasures in prospect, and I check myself, when I grieve for your absence, by remembering how much reason I have to rejoice in the hope of passing my whole life with you. A good fortune not to be valued ! [*i.e.* invaluable]. I am afraid of telling you that I return thanks for it to Heaven, because you will charge me with hypocrisy, but you are mistaken. I assist every day at public prayers in this family, and never forget in my private ejaculations how much I owe to Heaven for making me yours . . . 'Tis candle-light, or I should not conclude so soon. Pray, my love, begin at the top, and read till you come to the bottom.

We learn, from another letter, that her great-uncle, Lord Pierrepoint, has pronounced in favour of the newly-married couple ; and that the accomplished Lord Halifax, a kinsman of the husband, has promised to intercede on their behalf with the unforgiving parent. We find her afterwards at Hinchinbroke, the seat of Lord Sandwich,

which was convenient doubtlessly from its proximity to Huntingdon, the town that returned Mr Montagu to Parliament. Signs of atmospheric disturbance in the Eden-regions of matrimony then make their appearance. It would seem that her husband has tarried too long in London; that he has written seldom, and when he did write, wrote querulously:—

'I am alone,' she murmurs, 'without any amusement to take up my thoughts. I am in circumstances in which melancholy is apt to prevail even over all amusements, dispirited and alone, and you write me quarrelling letters. I hate complaining,' she continues; ''tis no sign I am easy that I do not trouble you with my headaches and my spleen; to be reasonable one should never complain but when one hopes redress. A physician should be the only confidant of bodily pains; and for pains of the mind, they should never be spoke of but to them that can and will relieve 'em. Should I tell you that I am uneasy, that I am out of humour and out of patience, should I see you half-an-hour the sooner?'

Observe here the letter-writer's earnestness prevails over any desire to show off her epistolary skill. There is none of that cool indifference, that gelid attachment, which formerly distinguished her effusions. Husband and wife seem almost to have changed places; and the latter has become the suitor and the suppliant. In the following we can trace no taint of artificiality; all is sincere and natural, so that no one, I think, can read the impassioned little missive without a touch of sympathy. I venture to transcribe it here:—

I am at present in so much uneasiness, my letter is not likely to be intelligible if it at all resembles the confusion of my head. I sometimes imagine you not well, and sometimes that you think it of small importance to write, or that greater matters have taken up your thoughts. This last imagination is too cruel for me. I will rather fancy your letter has miscarried, though I find little probability to think so. I know not what to think, and am near being distracted, amongst my variety of apprehensions. I am very ill company to the good people of the house, who all bid me make you their compliments . . . You don't deserve all this, if you can be so entirely for-

getful of all this part of the world. I am peevish with you by fits, and divide my time between anger and sorrow, which are equally troublesome to me. 'Tis the most cruel thing in the world to think one has reason to complain of what one loves. How can you be so careless? Is it because you don't love writing? You should remember I want to know you are safe at Durham. I shall imagine you have had some fall from your horse, or ill accident by the way, without regard to probability; there is nothing too extravagant for a woman's and a lover's fears. Did you receive my last letter? If you did not, the direction is wrong, you won't receive this, and my question is in vain. I find I begin to talk nonsense, and 'tis time to leave off. Pray, my dear, write to me, or I shall be very mad.'

In 1713, Lady Mary's sister, Frances, married the Earl of Mar, then Secretary of State for Scotland. It was not an acceptable alliance to Lady Mary, perhaps on account of the Earl's political tendencies, or the disparity of years between wife and husband. At all events it proved a sadly unfortunate one, for Mar took an active part in the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, wrecking his name, and fortune, and life. The marriage was quickly followed by the death of Lady Mary's only brother, Lord Kingston, who died of the malady which then slew so many thousands, small-pox. His brilliant sister mourned for him deeply. Writing to her husband, she says,—'I have been to-day at Acton to see my brother's melancholy family. I cannot describe how much it has sunk my spirits. . . . If I lose you—I cannot bear that—if—which I bless God is without probability; but since the loss of my poor, unhappy brother, I dread every evil.' Her zeal for inoculation, at a later period, was possibly stimulated by her painful recollection of the cause of her brother's untimely death.

A son, destined to a melancholy history, was born to Mr Montagu in 1713. According to the evil custom of the time, the child was put out to nurse; but his mother appears to have been by no means deficient in truly maternal affection. 'I thank God,' she writes to her hus-

band, 'this cold weather agrees very well with the child; and he seems stronger and better every day. But I shall be very glad if you send Dr Garth, if you would ask his opinion concerning the use of cold baths for young children. I hope you love the child as well as I do; but if you love me at all you'll desire the preservation of his health, for I should certainly break my heart for him.'

For the first three years after their marriage Mr Montagu and his wife were without a settled residence. They were sometimes at Hinchinbroke, sometimes at Huntingdon, sometimes at furnished houses in different parts of Yorkshire; and occasionally at Wharncliffe Lodge, near Sheffield, the seat of Lady Mary's father-in-law.

Early in 1714 she was at Middlethorpe, in the neighbourhood of York, whence she wrote to her husband, whom business detained in London:—

'The Archbishop of York has been come to Bishopthorpe but three days. I went with my cousin to-day to see the King' (George I.) 'proclaimed, which was done; the Archbishop walking next the Lord Mayor, and all the country gentry following, with greater crowds of people than I believed to be in York, vast acclamations, and the appearance of a general satisfaction. The Pretender afterwards dragged about the streets and burned. Ringing of bells, bonfires, and illuminations; the mob crying "Liberty and Protestantism!" and "Long live King George!" This morning all the principal men of any figure took post for London, and we are alarmed with fear of attempts from Scotland, though all the Protestants here seem unanimous for the Hanover succession. The poor young ladies at Castle Howard' (the seat of the Earl of Carlisle) 'are as much alarmed as I am, being left all alone, without any hopes of seeing their father again (though things should prove well) over eight or nine months. They have sent to desire me very earnestly to come to them, and bring my boy; 'tis the same thing as pensioning in a nunnery, for no mortal man ever enters the doors in the absence of their father, who is gone post. During this uncertainty, I think it will be a safe retreat, for Middlethorpe stands exposed to plunderers, if there be any at all. I dare say, after the zeal the Archbishop has showed, they'll visit his house (and consequently this) in the first place. The Archbishop made me many compliments on our near

neighbourhood, and said he should be overjoyed at the happiness of improving his acquaintance with you. I suppose you may now come in at Aldborough, and I heartily wish you were in Parliament. I saw the Archbishop's list of the Lords Regent appointed, and perceive Lord W— is not one of them; by which I guess the new scheme is not to make use of any man grossly infamous in either party; consequently, those that have been honest in regard to both, will stand fairest for preferment. You understand these things much better than I; but I hope you will be persuaded by me and your other friends (who I don't doubt will be of my opinion), that 'tis necessary for the common good, for an honest man to endeavour to be powerful, when he can be the one without losing the first more honourable title; and remember that money is the source of power.'

Through the influence of his friend, Lord Halifax, Mr Montagu was appointed one of the Lords of the Treasury (October 13th, 1714), and it was predicted that he would rapidly rise to a prominent position in the new Government, because he alone—with the exception, perhaps, of Lord Halifax—could speak French, and thus converse with the King, who knew nothing of English. This calculation failed, owing to the circumstance that George the First, unlike his predecessors, did not preside at the meetings of the Council; and all official business, therefore, was transacted through Sir Robert Walpole.

The following letter, dated September 24th, 1714, was written by Lady Mary before her husband's appointment to the Treasury. I quote it, because it admirably illustrates her quickness of observation as well as her liveliness of style:—

Though I am very impatient to see you, I would not have you by hastening to come down, loss any part of your interest. I am surprised you say nothing of where you stand. I had a letter from Mrs Hewet last post, who said she heard you stood at Newark, and would be chose without opposition; but I fear her intelligence is not at all to be depended on. I am glad you think of serving your friends; I hope it will put you in mind of serving yourself. I need not enlarge upon the advantages of money; everything we see, and everything we hear, puts us in remembrance of it. If it were possible

to restore liberty to your country, or limit the encroachment of the prerogative, by reducing yourself to a garret, I should be pleased to share so glorious a poverty with you ; but, as the world is and will be, 'tis a sort of duty to be rich, that it may be in one's power to do good ; riches being another word for power, toward the obtaining of which the first necessary qualification is impudence, and (as Demosthenes said of pronunciation in oratory) the second is impudence, and the third, still impudence. No modest man ever did, or ever will, make his fortune. Your friend, Lord Halifax, Robert Walpole, and all other remarkable instances of quick advancement, have been remarkably impudent. The Ministry is like a play at Court : there's a little door to get in, and a great crowd without, shoving and thrusting who shall be foremost ; people who knock others with their elbows, disregard a little kick of the shins, and still thrust heartily forwards, are sure of a good place. Your modest man stands behind in the crowd, is shoved about by everybody, his clothes torn, almost squeezed to death, and sees a thousand get in before him that don't make so good a figure as himself.

I don't say it is impossible for an impudent man not to rise in the world ; but a moderate merit, with a large share of impudence, is more probable to be advanced than the greatest qualification without it.

I have brought the life of Lady Mary down to the death of Queen Anne, when she was a handsome, witty, and accomplished woman of twenty-four, with the prospect before her of a bright and prosperous career. This prospect was not wholly realised. She attained to reputation, but not to happiness. With her later life, however, I can but cursorily deal, because it passes far beyond my limits, and moreover, because to do justice to it, and all the questions involved in it, would need more space than I have at my command. At the same time the reader will probably wish for a few particulars by way of rounding off the story. At the Court of George I. she shone for a while 'the observed of all observers.' Her brilliant conversation and her personal charms drew round her a large circle of admirers, including even the Prince of Wales, until he took offence at her political opinions, which were of a very free and liberal character. In

August 1716, she accompanied her husband on his embassy to Constantinople. Happily for posterity, the letters which, during her foreign sojourn, she addressed to her sister, Lady Mar,—to Lady Rich (Fenton's 'seraphic Rich, with zeal serene'),—Mrs Thistlethwaite,—and the poet Pope, whose acquaintance she had made shortly before leaving England, have been preserved; and we find in them a series of picturesque and entertaining sketches of Turkish life and manners. We notice in them, moreover, two conspicuous features: one, that if she were deficient in sentiment, and somewhat too inclined to aristocratic hauteur, she possessed a sound judgment and a rare faculty of observation, while her sympathies were always true and generous; second, that the affection for her husband, which she certainly felt at the outset of their married life, gradually faded, until he ceased to occupy her thoughts, except as 'a gentleman for whom circumstances and a kindly habit maintained a reasonable consideration.' The truth is, as she herself said before marriage, they were not suited to each other. She surpassed her husband in capacity, in culture, and in social qualifications; and as she became more and more a power in society, she learned to look with increasing indifference upon the grave, reticent, and somewhat formal father of her children. I should be disposed to feel for Mr Montagu a good deal of pity, did I not remember that he wedded this brilliant beauty in defiance of her warnings as to their incompatibility—fatal word, most ominous to the married ear!—of taste and temper.

The country owes to Lady Mary's residence in the East the introduction of inoculation, which considerably mitigated the ravages of small-pox. In a letter written from Adrianople, she says,—

> The smallpox, so fatal and so general among us, is here rendered entirely harmless by the invention of ingrafting, which is the term they give it. There is a set of old women who make it their business to

perform the operation every autumn, in the month of September, when the great heat is abated. People send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the smallpox; they make parties for this purpose, and, when they are met, the old woman comes with a nutshell full of the matter of the best sort of smallpox, and asks what vein you please to have opened. She immediately rips open that you offer her with a large needle, and puts into the vein as much matter as can lie upon the head of her needle, and after that, binds up the little wound with a hollow shell, and in this manner opens four or five veins.

With the courage of a true affection she tried the experiment upon her son. Afterwards, when she returned to England, she made great exertions to introduce the practice among her countrywomen. Now it seems to me that a woman of fashion who could conceive and persevere in so philanthropic an object, must have been gifted with a fine ardour of generous sympathy, a noble zeal for the public welfare; and that she is surely entitled to lenient judgment when her natural vivacity and her contempt for the conventional carried her beyond the ordinary limits of social punctilio. The work which she had undertaken was not an easy one. She had not only to prevail over the ignorance and credulity of the public, but to conquer the prejudices of the medical profession. The English people, and, down to a late date, their physicians, have always submitted to the tyranny of custom and tradition; and thousands are willing to die of a disease recommended by a respectable flavour of antiquity, rather than be healed by some 'new-fangled process.' It was, as Lady Louisa Stewart emphatically remarks, a thankless and an arduous enterprise. 'Those who have heard her applauded for it ever since they were born,' she says, 'and have also seen how joyfully vaccination was welcomed in their own days, may naturally conclude that when once the experiment was made, and had proved successful, she could have nothing to do but to sit down triumphant, and receive the thanks and blessings of

her countrymen.' But, on the contrary, she became the victim of obloquy, slander, and persecution. An almost incredible clamour was raised by a blatant bigotry. The medical faculty, always supremely conservative, rose in arms to a man, foretelling consequences the most disastrous. The clergy, not less conservative or superstitious, denounced from their pulpits the impiety of rebelling against the decrees of Providence, as if smallpox were a blessing sent direct from Heaven; while the common people were encouraged to hoot at her as an unnatural mother, who had endangered the lives of her own children. And though she gained many supporters among the higher and more enlightened classes, headed by the Princess of Wales, whose clear and vigorous intellect comprehended the far-reaching importance of her philanthropic efforts, she had the mortification of finding that some of her own friends and acquaintances joined in the ignorant outcry. The four 'distinguished physicians' whom the Government had appointed to watch the progress of her daughter's inoculation showed so much incredulity as to its success, and so much unwillingness that it should succeed—such an unworthy spirit of 'rancour and malignity'—that she was afraid to leave the child alone with them for a second, lest they should interfere with the mode of treatment.

The terrible disease against which she strove with so much chivalrous energy appears to have exercised a strong impression on her imagination. In one of her *Town Eclogues*, published in 1716, she refers to its ravages:—

> 'The wretched Flavia on her couch reclined,
> Thus breathed the anguish of a wounded mind.
> A glass reversed in her right hand she bore,
> For now she shunned the face she sought before.
> "How am I changed! alas, how am I grown
> A frightful spectre, to myself unknown!
> Where's my complexion? where my radiant bloom
> That promised happiness for years to come?

Then with what pleasure I this face surveyed!
To look once more my visits oft delayed!
Charmed with the view a fresher red would rise,
And a new life shot sparkling from my eyes!
Ah, faithless glass, my wonted bloom restore—
Alas, I rave—that bloom is now no more!
The greatest good the gods on men bestow,
Ev'n youth itself, to me is useless now. . . .
As round the room I turn my weeping eyes,
New unaffected scenes of sorrow rise.
Far from my sight that killing picture bear,
The face disfigure and the canvas tear:
That picture which with pride I used to show,
The lost resemblance but upbraids me now."'

While abroad, Lady Mary and her husband visited several parts of Germany, and on their return, traversed the Archipelago, crossed the Mediterranean to Genoa, and thence homeward by Lyons and Paris. From all these places she wrote letters of the liveliest description, which may still be read with interest, so vigorous and racy is their style, and so conspicuous is their good sense. There is scarcely any better letter-writing in our literature. With the famous letters of Madame de Sévigné they will bear comparison; if less polished, they are more natural.

It was in October 1718 that Lady Mary once more burst upon London society, of which she was well fitted to become a leader. Still in the very prime of womanhood—she was only twenty-eight—her personal graces were dazzling; there was fascination in her smile, supremacy in her glance. Her accomplishments were many; her manners graceful, easy, and agreeable; her conversation, always attractive, had gained additional charms from the stores of anecdote and observation she had collected during foreign travel. It was natural that such a woman should draw to herself a host of admirers; and not much wonder, perhaps, that she accepted their admiration. To the quarrel with Pope which this womanly failing helped to bring about

I have already alluded; but it plunged her into even more unpleasant episodes, and was the chief source of the scandal which has hung like a blighting cloud upon her fame. Another cause was her impetuous unconventionalism; she persisted in calling a spade a spade—unless, indeed, she used some coarser term; and did not fear to approach the very borders which separate the becoming from the unbecoming. Further, she was conscious of her powers of sarcasm, and not very careful about the use she made of them. She spared neither friend nor foe; laughed at everything and everybody; would fling her ready epigram at the objects which Mrs Grundy most dearly cherished. One who wrote and spoke so liberally, and yet so sharply, could not fail to awaken enmities, which caused her much annoyance in her lifetime, and have pursued her to this day with their evil shadow. It must not be supposed that I would defend either her occasional coarseness, her unmeasured raillery, or her want of seriousness when seriousness would have been proper; but I do not believe her to have been guilty of any greater errors. The only evidence against her is that of witnesses who have no claim to be believed.

We quote one of Lady Mary's letters, written in 1724:—

I pass many hours on horseback, and, I assure you, ride stag-hunting, which I know you'll stare to hear of. I have arrived to vast courage and skill that way, and am as well pleased with it as with the acquisition of a new sense. His Royal Highness hunts in Richmond Park, and I make one of the *beau monde* in his train. I desire you after this account not to name the word old woman to me any more. I approach to fifteen nearer than I did ten years ago, and am in hopes to improve every year in health and vivacity. . . .

I am now at the same distance from London that you are from Paris, and could pall with solitary amusements with a good deal of taste; but I resist it as a temptation of Satan, and rather turn my endeavours to make the world as agreeable to me as I can, which is the true philosophy; that of despising it is of no use but to hasten wrinkles. I ride a good deal, and have got a horse superior to any

two-legged animal, he being without a fault. I work like an angel. I receive visits upon idle days, and I shade my life as I do my tent stitch, that is, make as easy transitions as I can from business to pleasure ; the one would be too glaring and gaudy without some dark shades of t'other ; and if I worked altogether in the grave colours, you know 'twould be quite dismal.

In the meantime I divert myself passably enough, and take care to improve as much as possible that stock of vanity and credulity that Heaven in its mercy has furnished me with, being sensible that to these two qualities, simple as they appear, all the pleasures of life are owing. I see everybody, but converse with nobody but *des amies choisies ;* in the first rank of these are Lady Stafford and dear Molly Skirret (afterwards Lady Walpole), both of which have now the additional credit of being old acquaintances, and never having given me any reason to complain of either of 'em. I pass some days with the Duchess of Montague, who might be a reigning beauty if she pleased. I see the whole town every Sunday, and select a few that I retain to supper ; in short, if life could be always what it is. I have so much humility in my temper that I could be contented without anything better this two or three hundred years ; but alas !—

> ' Dulness, and wrinkles, and disease must come,
> And age, and death's irrevocable doom.'

I never was better in my life, nor ever passed my hours more agreeably. I ride between London and Twickenham perpetually, and have little societies quite to my taste, and that is saying everything. I leave the great world to girls that know no better, and do not think one bit the worse of myself for having outlived a certain giddiness, which is sometimes excusable but never pleasing. Depend upon it, 'tis only the spleen that gives you these ideas. You may have many delightful days to come, and there is nothing more silly than to be too wise to be happy.

> ' If to be sad is to be wise,
> I do most heartily despise
> Whatever Socrates has said,
> Or Tully writ, or Montaigne read.'

This is a vile world, and I can easily comprehend that, whether one is at Paris or London, one is stifled with a certain mixture of fool and knave, that most people are composed of. I would have patience with a parcel of polite rogues or your downright honest fools ; but Father Adam shines through his whole progeny. So much for our inside,—then our outward is so liable to ugliness and distempers,

that we are perpetually plagued with feeling our own decays and seeing those of other people. Yet sixpennyworth of common sense divided among a whole nation would make our lives roll away glibly enough; but then we make laws and we follow customs.

In 1739 Lady Mary left England, resolving to spend the remainder of her life on the Continent; and in Italy or its neighbourhood she resided until within a year of her death. This separation from her husband, and self-banishment from the fashionable circles in which she had shone conspicuous, is not unnaturally the cause of eager speculation on the part of her biographers. Mr Dallaway attributes it to 'declining health.' Lady Louisa Stuart, our heroine's grand-daughter, frankly gives it up as inexplicable, as no positive or trustworthy evidence on the subject exists. Leigh Hunt, who poses as the self-constituted accuser and judge of Lady Mary, professes to discover the reason in her husband's disgust at her immoralities. 'In certain matters,' he says, 'her independence of conduct was such as to render it impossible for her husband either to live with, or to separate from her, without danger of public scandal.' And he adds:—'Therefore, as he foresaw its continuation, he very sensibly, and like a man philosophical from temperament and self-regard, proposed, or agreed to a proposal, that they should live apart, without noise—without any show of hostility—without manifestations of any sort calculated to subject either of them to more talk than could be helped.' Now, apart from the slanderous imputations of Horace Walpole, the unsupported assertions of an unscrupulous enemy, there is absolutely no foundation for Leigh Hunt's assumption; and it is surely unreasonable to suppose that, after condoning Lady Mary's 'independence of conduct' for twenty years, Mr Wortley would publicly resent it when his wife had attained the ripe age of fifty. If his philosophy from 'temperament and self-regard' had stood the strain of nearly a quarter of a century, it might well have endured

to the end. We have frankly owned that Lady Mary permitted herself a licence of language which is justly offensive to the taste of the present day; but such a licence was common enough among her contemporaries, and ladies of unimpeachable virtue then talked and wrote with a plainness which is now confined, I hope, to the patrons of the lower class music halls.

It is to be remembered that Mr Montagu continued to correspond with his wife down to the day of his death in terms of respect and confidence, which prove either that he entertained no suspicion of her conjugal fidelity, or that he carried his philosophical temperament and self-regard to an excess which rendered him careless of his own honour. It is not enough to say, as Leigh Hunt says, that 'all this goes for nothing;' if so, what is the use of any kind of evidence? 'Rumours,' remarks Mrs Oliphant, 'are poor things to hold up before us at a distance of a hundred and thirty years; and even Horace Walpole, even Pope, have nothing but vague irritation to vent against Lady Mary. And Mr Wortley's letters, after his wife's departure, give us for the first time a certain friendliness for the heavy man, who is glad of her comfort in his composed way, and trusts her in their common concerns, and cares for her health and wellbeing. The two would seem after their stormy beginning to have grown into a certain friendship with the years. Perhaps he meant to join her, as several of his letters imply; or perhaps he permitted her to believe that he meant to join her; or perhaps it was held vaguely possible, as a thing that might or might not be, indifferent to the world, not over interesting even to themselves.' For my own part, I believe that Lady Mary left England, first, because she had grown weary of it; second, because the free exercise of her satirical powers had raised around her a crowd of enemies; and, third, because advancing years brought out more strongly the incompatibility of temper which had always been a dis-

turbing element in the relations between her husband and herself.

Her long residence abroad was chequered by various misadventures, which, however, call for no notice here. Either at the solicitation of her daughter, or in order to settle the affairs of her husband, who died in the summer of 1761, she returned to England in the October of that year. Elizabeth Montagu, who saw her soon afterwards, writes:—

'She does not look older than when she went abroad, has more than the vivacity of fifteen, and a memory which is perhaps unique. Several people,' she adds, 'visited her out of curiosity, which she did not like. I visit her because her husband and mine were cousins-german; and though she has not any foolish partiality for her husband and his relations, I was very graciously received, and, you may imagine, entertained by one who neither thinks, speaks, acts, nor dresses like anybody else. Her domestic establishment is made up of all nations; and when you get into her drawing-room, you imagine you are in the first storey of the Tower of Babel. An Hungarian servant takes your name at the door; he gives it to an Italian, who delivers it to a Frenchman, the Frenchman to a Swiss, and the Swiss to a Polander; so that, by the time you get to her ladyship's presence, you have changed your name five times without the expense of an Act of Parliament.'

Lady Mary died on the 21st of August 1762. The direct cause of her death was cancer, which, with indomitable courage, she had long concealed. 'I met her,' says Miss Montagu, 'at my Lady Bute's in June, and she then looked well; in three weeks after, at my return to London, I heard she was given over. The hemlock kept her drowsy and free from pain; and the physicians thought, if it had been given early, it might have saved her.'

But now I must take my leave of Lady Mary, whom I have shown, I think, to have been a woman more sinned against than sinning; a woman whose constitutional vivacity and animal spirits incessantly rebelled against the artificial forms and conventionalities of society; whose

consciousness of superior intellectual power made her imprudently disregardful of the opinion of those who surrounded her; whose warmth of disposition betrayed her into a frankness of language which her capacity for satire rendered dangerous;—a woman born with strong affections, as her intercourse with her daughter proved, who would have been a devoted wife to a husband able at once to guide and sympathise with her: and a woman who, fortunate in the possession of beauty, wit, sound sense, and rare charm of manner, was unfortunate in a vivacity of disposition which exposed her to the enmity of a Horace Walpole and a Pope. After careful consideration, I have formed the belief that her failings were of no very serious a character; and therefore I am content to excuse them, in acknowledgment of the boon she conferred upon posterity by bequeathing to it her charming letters.

CHAPTER III.

A LONELY MAN OF LETTERS—DANIEL DEFOE.

IN the preface to the third part of his immortal fiction (*Serious Reflections on Morals and Religion*), Daniel Defoe invites the reader to draw a parallel between it and its author's life-history. 'There is a man alive,' he says, 'and well known too, the actions of whose life are the first subject of these volumes, and to whom all or most part of the story most directly alludes; this,' he adds, 'may be depended upon for truth.' To some extent, perhaps, the story of *Robinson Crusoe* is, as its author would have us believe, an allegory. The lonely life of the castaway on his remote island reminds us of the loneliness of Defoe in the world against which he battled with so sturdy a spirit. The savages whose desperate attacks Robinson Crusoe successfully resisted were not more persistent or more bitter than the enemies who pursued Defoe with their implacable hostility. And in his self-contained, resolute genius he found that help and companionship which the hero of his great romance is made to find in his faithful and affectionate Friday. But the allegory must not be pushed too far; and, after all, the chief point of resemblance is in the solitariness of Crusoe and that of Crusoe's creator, who, throughout his laborious career, was, as I have styled him, a lonely man of letters.

DANIEL DEFOE, or DE FOE, was born in the parish of St Giles, Cripplegate, in 1660, the year of the 'glorious'

or 'blessed' Restoration. He was the son of James Foe, citizen and butcher, of London; and the grandson of Daniel Foe, a gentleman of good estate in Northamptonshire, to whose honour it is recorded that he kept a pack of hounds. Of James Foe, the father, but little is known, though that little is certainly to his credit. He seems to have been a man of decent life and sound principles: a consistent Nonconformist; and a wise and thoughtful head of a household. He gave his son the best education that the illiberal prejudices of the time left available for Dissenters, and lived to see him make vigorous and successful use of it in the cause of civil and religious freedom. He died about 1706-7, and his memory was affectionately cherished by Defoe.

The early life of Defoe was spent, therefore, under happy auspices; and his mind was carefully imbued with religious sentiments. His resolute, patient, dogged perseverance made itself manifest in his boyhood: and when the persecuted Nonconformists had reason to apprehend that the Government would deprive them of their printed copies of the Bible, he set to work on the arduous task of transcribing the Old Testament, and actually completed the whole of the Pentateuch. Recognising his force of character and his vigorous talents, his father destined him for 'the ministry of the Word,' and with this view he was sent to the celebrated Dissenting Academy at Newington Green, then under the direction of a man of ripe scholarship and ability, the Rev. Charles Morton. Here his progress in various departments of study was rapid enough, and so was his intellectual development. With characteristic independence, he began to inquire of himself whether the career chosen for him was one for which he was fitted or was fitted for him, and he decided in the negative. However, in common with all Mr Morton's pupils, he went through a course of theology; he studied also the elements of political science; roamed over the

wide fields of logic, geography, natural philosophy, history, and mathematics, not without collecting facts and forming opinions; gained some acquaintance with Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, with French and Italian, and, as all lovers of English literature know, learned to write his mother-tongue with perspicuity, strength, and ease.

As he declined a clerical career, his father placed him, when he left school, in the warehouse of a wholesale hose-factor; but this was by no means the field of action for his energetic and cultured intellect, and he was still a young, a very young man, when he made his first venture on the stormy sea of politics. In 1683, he published a stirring polemical tract, *Presbytery Rough Drawn*. Though a strenuous Protestant, he was no bigot; and he denounced the bitter persecution of the Roman Catholics during the closing years of Charles the Second's reign. At a later time he wrote:—'I never blame men who, professing principles destructive of the Constitution they live under, and believing it their just right to supplant it, act in conformity to the principles they profess. I believe if I were a Papist I should do the same. Believing the merit of it would carry me to heaven, I doubt not I should go as far as another. But when we ran up that plot to general massacres, fleets of pilgrims, bits and bridles, knives, handcuffs, and a thousand such things, I confess, though a boy, I could not then, nor even now, come up to them. And my reasons were, as they still are, because I see no cause to believe the Papists to be fools, whatever else we had occasion to think them. A general massacre, truly! when the Papists are not five to a hundred, in some counties not one, and within the city hardly one to a thousand.'

Throughout his career, Defoe maintained a consistent adherence to the great principle of religious toleration; and for bigotry, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, reserved his most vehement denunciations. On one occasion he entered a crowd of listeners who, with open

ear and mouth, were devouring the latest scandal against 'the Papishes.' An itinerant spouter was retailing a marvellous invention in reference to the newly erected Monument. 'Last night,' said he, unblushingly, 'six Frenchmen came up and stole it away; and but for the watch, who stopped them as they went over the bridge, and made them carry it back again, they might, for aught we know, have carried it over into France. These Papishes will never have done.' Some of the bystanders received this stupendous fiction with looks of incredulity, and Defoe stepping forward, demonstrated its grossness by adding a detail of his own invention. 'If you do but hasten to the spot,' said he, 'you will see the workmen engaged in making all fast again!'

Seven years later, Defoe, or Foe, as he then called himself, started in business on his own account. He became a liveryman of London, and established himself in Freeman's Court, Cornhill, as a hose-factor. His absorbing interest in politics, however, must have interfered seriously with the success of his commercial speculations. In Defoe's time, political questions affected deeply the civil and religious liberty of every Englishman; and he who plunged into their discussion was brought face to face with interests of the most vital character. Defoe clearly perceived the drift of James the Second's Government. He saw that he aimed at the re-establishment of the Roman communion, and of the absolute power of the Crown. His brave soul glowed with indignation when he heard the Divine right and infallibility of kings preached from the church pulpits; when he heard it publicly asserted that if the king demanded his head, and sent his messengers to fetch it, he was bound to submit, and stand still while it was cut off. In such circumstances, he hailed the Duke of Monmouth's insurrection as offering an opportunity for the maintenance of Protestantism and the restoration of civil and religious liberty. He was one of those staunch citizens

of London who, on hearing that Monmouth had landed, mounted horse, and rode away to join him. He served under his flag at Bath and Bristol, but he was not present on the fatal field of Sedgmoor, where Monmouth's hopes were crushed in blood. On hearing of the disaster, he made all haste to the sea-shore, and succeeded in escaping to the Continent. He travelled through Spain and Portugal as a trader, and visited France and Germany; and when the persecution of Monmouth's partisans had ceased, ventured to return to England. While abroad, he had learned to put a 'De' before his name, and as Daniel De Foe, or Defoe, he renewed his political activity, issuing three pamphlets in quick succession—all in 1687—namely, *A Tract against the Proclamation for the Repeal of the Penal Laws; A Pamphlet against the Addresses to King James;* and *A Tract upon the Dispensing Power.*

In the following year, William of Orange landed at Torbay, and Defoe hastened to welcome 'the Deliverer.' Armed, and on horseback, he joined the second line of his army at Henley-upon-Thames, and probably accompanied him on his entry into London. Gallantly equipped and mounted, he was one of 'the royal regiment of volunteer horse, made up of the chief citizens,' who attended William and Mary on their first visit to Guildhall. It is not too much to say that between King William and the sturdy political Dissenter who so promptly tendered his allegiance, a striking resemblance of character existed. Both were self-reliant, grave, and serious men, capable of repressing their emotions, and strong enough to stand alone. Both were firm advocates of religious toleration. Both were convinced of the need of opposing the aggressive policy of Louis the Fourteenth. Even in religious matters, the opinions of the Lutheran King probably approached very nearly to those of his Nonconformist subject. It is certain that William gave much of his confidence to Defoe, and that Defoe regarded the King with

respectful admiration. To the close of his life he celebrated as a festival the memorable Fourth of November, the day on which William landed at Torbay,—'a day,' he wrote, 'famous on various accounts, and every one of them dear to Britons who love their country, value the Protestant interest, or have an aversion to tyranny and oppression. On this day he was born; on this day he married the daughter of England; and on this day he rescued the nation from a bondage worse than that of Egypt—a bondage of soul as well as bodily servitude—a slavery to the ambition and raging lust of a generation set on fire by pride, avarice, cruelty, and blood.'

The first anniversary of this great day he celebrated at his country house in the pleasant village of Tooting, where he resided for some time, forming the Dissenters of the neighbourhood into a regular congregation, and supplying them with a devout and learned man for minister. He afterwards removed to the neighbourhood of Mickleham, 'the Happy Valley,' as it is sometimes, and not inappropriately called, in allusion to the rich pastoral beauty of its scenery.

In 1691 appeared Defoe's first metrical composition, entitled *A New Discovery of an Old Intrigue: a Satyr levelled at Treachery and Ambition; calculated to the Nativity of the Rapparee Plott, and the Modesty of the Jacobite Clergy.* Of Defoe's verse it may at once be said that it is entirely deficient in the essential elements of poetry,—imagination and fancy; nor is there any murmur of music in it; any glow of language or richness of imagery. It is plain and unadorned; generally vigorous, and always intelligible. One always wonders why its author should have taken the trouble to shape into two-syllable lines what he could much more easily have said in prose; but probably he knew the effect of rhyme upon the popular ear, and no doubt some of his strong pithy couplets were readily ingrafted upon the public memory.

Defoe's pecuniary difficulties began about 1692, and I

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think we must admit that they were in a great measure of his own creation. As a politician and a pamphleteer he had neither the leisure nor the taste for the proper and efficient conduct of commercial ventures. In his book *The Compleat Tradesman*, he indicates very forcibly the causes of his non-success:—'A wit turned tradesman!' he exclaims; 'what an incongruous part of nature is there brought together, consisting of direct contraries! No apron strings will hold him; 'tis in vain to lock him in behind the compter—he's gone in a moment; instead of journal and ledger, he runs away to his Virgil and Horace; his journal entries are all Pindaricks, and his ledger all Heroicks: he is truly dramatic from one end to the other, through the whole scene of his trade; and as the first part is all comedy, so the two last acts are all made up with tragedy; a statute of bankrupt is his *Exeunt omnes*, and he generally speaks the Epilogue in the Fleet Prison or the Mint.'

An angry creditor took out against Defoe a commission of bankruptcy, but it was soon superseded at the request of his other creditors; and eventually his proposal of composition was accepted on his single bond. It should be added, to his honour, that this he punctually paid, by the most indefatigable exertion of industry and self-denial. And afterwards, when he had risen to a position of comparative affluence, and some of his more indulgent creditors had been overtaken by misfortune, he voluntarily discharged their claims in full.

While his creditors were discussing his proposal, he took refuge in Bristol, to escape the imprisonment threatened by one of the number. There he was known as 'the Sunday Gentleman,' because, from fear of bailiffs, he could not appear in public on any other day. But on these occasions he affected considerable splendour of attire—a fine flowing wig, lace ruffles, and a sword by his side. While at Bristol, he wrote his *Essay on Projects*, which,

however, was not published until 1697. In this essay his fertile and sagacious mind anticipated many of the improvements which have only in recent years been effected; such as reforms in the English banking system, and the establishment of county banks; the better management of the public roads; a reform of the bankruptcy law in the interest both of the creditor and the honest debtor; offices for insurance 'in every case of risk;' the formation of friendly societies; a savings' bank for the poor; a military college; abolition of the press-gang; a college for the higher education of women; and a more humane custody of lunatics, which he aptly described as 'a particular rent-charge on the great family of mankind.'

On his return to London, after two years of retirement, Defoe was employed, 'with some eminent persons at home,' in devising ways and means for the English Government in its conduct of the war against France. His patriotic exertions were rewarded by his appointment, from 1694 to 1699, as accountant to the Commissioners of the Glass Duty; and it was probably this appointment which furnished him with the capital necessary for the establishment of extensive tile-kiln and brick-kiln works at Tilbury, on the Thames; where, for several years, he gave employment to upwards of a hundred poor workmen, and where, among the rough and daring men frequenting the shores of the great estuary, it is possible that he gathered the nautical knowledge and miscellaneous out-of-the-way information he employed to such good advantage.

His enterprise prospered; he soon began to pay off his liabilities, and every year enlarged his capital. But business could not deaden or pretermit his absorbing interest in public affairs. With a bold and manly pen he supported the principal measures of King William; advocated the formation of a small standing army, and defended vigorously the immortal principle of religious toleration. In 1700 he published his second metrical

satire, *The Pacificator*, which is superior to the first in vigour of style. The following year witnessed the publication of one of the best of his works, *The True-Born Englishman;* a reply to 'a vile abhorred pamphlet, in very ill verse, written by one Mr Tutchin, and called *The Foreigners;* in which the author fell personally upon the King himself, and then upon the Dutch nation.' The main object of his trenchant satire was to show the composite character of the English race, and that its success was owing to this admixture of different national qualities; but he takes occasion also to vindicate the right of the people to civil and religious liberty. Some of its lines are still remembered; as, for example:—

> 'Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
> The Devil always builds a chapel there;
> And 'twill be found, upon examination,
> The latter has the largest congregation.'

And again:—

> 'Of all plagues with which mankind are curst,
> Ecclesiastic tyranny's the worst.'

Yet again:—

> 'When kings the sword of justice first lay down,
> They are no kings, though they possess the crown.
> Titles are shadows, crowns are empty things,
> The good of subjects is the end of kings.'

'In this composition,' says Sir Walter Scott, 'the satire was strong, powerful, and manly, upbraiding the English Tories for their unreasonable prejudice against foreigners; the rather that there were so many nations blended in the mass now called Englishmen. The verse was rough and mistuned, for Defoe never seems to have possessed an ear for the melody of language, whether in prose or verse. But though wanting "the long-resounding verse and energy divine" of Dryden, he had often masculine expressions and happy terms of thought not unworthy of the

author of *Absalom and Ahithophel*, though, upon the whole, his style seems rather to have been formed on that of Hall, Oldham, and the older satirists.'

Landor truly characterises Defoe as 'the most far-sighted of our statesmen, and the most worthily trusted by the wisest of our kings.' There is no doubt that William understood and appreciated the services which his bold and sagacious subject disinterestedly rendered. He employed him in commissions of the highest importance, and gave him free access to his cabinet. In their confidential discussions the greatest questions of the time were examined with a view to solution; and especially that vital one, the Union of England and Scotland. This was very dear to Defoe's patriotic spirit, and he urgently pressed the King to carry it into effect. 'It shall be done,' said William, 'but not yet.'

I find it impossible to record even the titles of all the pamphlets which flowed from Defoe's fertile intellect, much less to indicate their character or purport. Notwithstanding their number, it cannot be said that any one sinks below mediocrity, while many rise above it, and are distinguished by their breadth of view, political foresight, and candid integrity. The most celebrated and the most powerful—and the one possessing the greatest permanent value, is that entitled *The Original Power of the Collective Body of the People of England, Examined and Asserted. With a Double Dedication to the King and to the Parliament.* Mr Forster does not praise too highly this luminous and exhaustive defence of the principle of popular representation when he says,—'It may be briefly described as a demonstration of the predominance of the original (the People's) over the delegated authority (that of King and Parliament); and it remains still, as it was when first written, the ablest, plainest, and most courageous exposition in our language of the doctrine on which our own and all free political constitutions rest.'

The death of William III. (March 8th, 1702) deprived England of a wise ruler, and Defoe of a consistent patron. No regret, however, was felt or acknowledged by the Tory party, who hastened to lampoon the deceased King's memory with petty malignancy, and thereby provoked the manly indignation of Defoe. He assailed them with just severity in his poem of *The Mock Mourners: a Satire, by way of Elegy on King William*, which passed through seven large editions in a twelvemonth. To the end of his life Defoe ceased not to speak with reverent admiration of the great ruler, whom he characterised as 'the best King England ever saw.' Once, when suffering from the injustice of his enemies, he pathetically exclaimed,—'I shall never forget his goodness to me. It was my honour and advantage to call him master as well as sovereign. I never patiently heard his memory slighted, nor ever can do so. Had he lived, he would never have suffered me to be treated as I have been in this world.'

With a new reign came in new men and new ways; or rather the old ways were revived—the old Toryism rose again into fashion; the old doctrines of passive obedience and divine right were preached from High Church pulpits; and the necessity of conformity to the English Church was laid down with uncompromising violence. Sacheverell, in a sermon at Oxford, openly asserted that they were no true sons of the Church who did not raise against Dissent 'the bloody flag and banner of defiance.' All alone as he stood, without friend or supporter, Defoe could not remain silent while brazen voices cried down liberty of conscience; and on behalf of his favourite principle of toleration, he struck into the fight with his famous pamphlet, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. He begins his satire with a fable from Sir Roger L'Estrange. A cock roosting in a stable fell from his perch, and, finding himself endangered by restless hoofs, proposed to the horses that everybody should

keep his legs quiet. This fable Defoe, writing in the character of a fanatical High Churchman, applied to the Dissenters, who were asking, he said, for equal treatment, though, when they had had the upper hand, they had persecuted with plenty of vigour. Here Defoe levelled a fine reproach at the intolerance of his own party—a reproach which they took very ill indeed. In bitter irony he then turned upon the High Churchmen. Several reasons, he said, had been urged why the Dissenters should be continued and tolerated among us; and of these he proceeded to dispose in a fine vein of assumed gravity. He was convinced that the nation would never enjoy a settled uninterrupted union and tranquillity till the spirit of Whiggism, faction, and schism was melted down like the old money. He did not prescribe fire and faggot, but *Delinda est Carthago.* The Dissenters must be rooted out of the nation, if ever Englishmen were to live in peace or serve God. The light foolish handling of them by fines was their glory and advantage. If the gallows instead of the compter, and the galleys instead of the fines, were the reward of going to a conventicle, there would not be so many sufferers. He continued:—'If one severe law were made, and punctually executed, that whoever was found at a conventicle should be banished the nation, and the preacher be hanged, we should soon see an end of the tale. They would all come to church, and one age would make us one again. To talk of five shillings a month for not coming to the sacrament, and of one shilling a week for not coming to church—this is such a way of converting a people as never was known. This is selling them a liberty to transgress for so much money. If it be not a crime, why don't we give them full licence? And if it be, no price ought to compound for the committing it; for that is selling a liberty to people to sin against God and the Government.'

So ably and gravely written was this piece of exquisite

irony that at first the whole nation was taken in. Jacobites and High Churchmen hailed it with enthusiasm; a Cambridge Fellow thanked his bookseller for having sent him so valuable a treatise, next to the Holy Bible and the Sacred Comments the most precious he had ever read. The Dissenters were wild with wrath. All at once it was discovered that the author was a Dissenter, and the pamphlet a satire in the interests of Nonconformity. Then indeed a storm of fury broke about Defoe's ears. Again he stood all alone, for the Dissenters, to their shame, joined in the unholy clamour, because he had dared to reprove them for their own imperfect sense of true toleration. The House of Commons declared the tract a libel, and ordered it to be burned by the hands of the common hangman. Defoe went into hiding; but when he found that the vengeance of the Government was being levelled at the printer and the publisher, he at once came forward and surrendered himself. He was thrown into prison, tried at the Old Bailey (in July 1703), and sentenced to pay a fine of five hundred marks, to stand three times in the pillory, to be imprisoned during the Queen's pleasure, and to find sureties for good behaviour for seven years. To serve one's country, you see, is not always a pleasant thing, or profitable!

He was allowed twenty days to prepare himself for the pillory, and occupied them in composing his *Hymn to the Pillory*, published on the first of those three days of national disgrace, July 22d, 30th, and 31st. The just fervour of his indignation has here made him almost a poet. Addressing the instrument of punishment, he says:—

> 'Hail! hieroglyphic State-machine,
> Contrived to punish Fancy in,
> Men that *are* men, in thee can feel no pain,
> And all thy insignificance disdain.
> Contempt, that false new word for shame,
> Is, without crime, an empty name;

A shadow to amuse mankind,
But ne'er to fright the wise or well-fixed mind—
Virtue despises human sense!'

The author of these manly utterances was successively exposed in the pillory before the Royal Exchange, near the Conduit in Cheapside, and at Temple Bar. No doubt the reader will recall Pope's unworthy sneer:—

'Earless on high stood unabashed Defoe,
And Tutchin flagrant from the scourge below.'

But what was meant for his disgrace and humiliation the public sympathy converted to his honour. Instead of loading him with insult and obloquy, the crowd, recognising in him a brave and honest man, the champion of truth and justice, hailed him with shouts of applause. They decorated the 'State-machine' with wreaths of flowers, and passed from hand to hand the printed copies of the *Hymn*, in which he had courageously defied his oppressors. 'The people were expected to treat me very ill,' he says, 'but it was not so. On the contrary, they were with me, wished those who had set me there were placed in my room, and expressed their affections by loud shouts and acclamations when I was taken down.'

Though baffled in this particular form of oppression, his persecutors in others were more successful. Defoe retired from the pillory to Newgate, where he was detained for some time, and in the interval his business went to pieces. He was compelled, at a loss of upwards of three thousand five hundred pounds, to abandon his large and prosperous works at Tilbury, and to trust to his pen for the support of his wife and children. Defoe seems to have had no friends to stand by him,—not a helping hand or a sympathising voice;—the loneliest of men of letters he doggedly went on his way, braving the blasts of adversity with undaunted front. The Ishmael of politics, he had every man's hand against him; but he held his ground so

firmly, and dealt his blows so heavily, that his assailants were worsted in every encounter. But political warfare did not exhaust all the energies of that ready and masculine intellect. He breasted the fierce waves of theological controversy, opposed with warmth a projected censorship of the press, discussed the question of copyright with great keenness, compiled a singularly graphic description of the Great Storm of 1704, and, in the February of the same year, started his famous *Review*—in itself a striking illustration of his originality of mind and force of character. The *Review* was in all respects a novelty, for it dealt not only with politics but with morals. It combined both public and personal questions, and while it treated of the errors of governments, ridiculed the follies of society and examined the grievances of individuals. To indicate its character I shall summarise briefly the contents of the first volume, omitting, however, those of a political complexion. It condemns the prevalent practices of excessive drinking and excessive swearing; censures the laxity which had crept into the relations of married life; inveighs against the licentiousness of the stage; investigates various aspects of trade and pauperism; touches upon the mania for speculations of a gambling nature; and denounces with just severity the barbarous code of honour of which duelling was the outcome. Widely different as these various subjects are, Defoe treats them with almost equal ability and knowledge, so that the *Review* is the best testimony that could be desired to his strong and healthy capacity, his sound judgment, and his multifarious information. And no doubt Steele and Addison afterwards profited by the machinery he invented for the treatment of non-political matters,—the so-called 'Scandal Club,' which was supposed to receive individual complaints, and act as the justice of each case required. For example:—'A gentleman appears before the Club, and complains of his wife. She is a bad wife: he cannot exactly tell why.

There is a long examination, proving nothing: when suddenly a member of the Club begs pardon for the question, and asks if his worship was a good husband. His worship, greatly surprised at such a question, is again at a loss to answer. Whereupon the Club pass three resolutions:—1. That most women that are bad wives are made so by bad husbands; 2. That this Society will hear no complaints against a virtuous bad wife from a vicious good husband; 3. That he that has a bad wife, and can't find the reason of it in her, 'tis ten to one that he finds it in himself. And the decision finally is, that the gentleman is to go home, and be a good husband for at least three months; after which, if his wife is still uncured, they will proceed against her as they shall find cause. In this way pleas and defences are heard on the various points that present themselves in the subjects named, and not seldom with a lively dramatic interest.'

I am constrained to admit, however, that Defoe's humour is of an elephantine order; it has none of the brave geniality of Steele or the delicacy of Addison; he is best when he is serious. To this solitary man life necessarily presented itself in its graver aspects, and his laugh has always a forced sound about it.

The *Review* was at first a quarto sheet, published weekly, at the price of a penny. After the fourth number it was reduced to half a sheet, but printed in closer type and in double columns, and sold for twopence. After the eighth number it was published twice a week, on Tuesdays and Saturdays. In due time monthly supplements were issued, and finally it appeared on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. It was continued for nine years by Defoe, unaided—namely, from February 19, 1704, to June 11, 1713.

In August 1704, through the influence of Harley, Defoe was released from Newgate. He tells us that Harley sent a message 'by word of mouth' to the author

of *The Trueborn Englishman*, 'Pray, ask Mr Defoe what I can do for him.' Defoe took a piece of paper and wrote in reply:—'Lord, dost thou see that I am blind, and yet ask me what thou shalt do for me? My answer is plain in my misery—"Lord, that I may receive my sight!"'

Months of imprisonment had greatly injured the health of this martyr of liberty, and on his release he withdrew to a small house in the rural neighbourhood of Bury. But there was no cessation in his literary activity. That energetic and fertile brain was unable to rest. Blenheim was celebrated in a *Hymn to Victory*. Then came ready replies to Tory and High Church pamphlets—a sagacious rebuke of indiscriminate alms-giving, entitled *Giving Alms in Charity; The Double Welcome*, an address in verse to the Duke of Marlborough; and a pungent satirical exposition of social follies, *The Consolidator; or, Memoirs of Sundry Transactions from the World to the Moon. Translated from the Lunar language.*

Somewhat recruited in health, Defoe returned to London, and strode into the press of political warfare as an uncompromising supporter of the Whig Government. Had he consulted his ease he would not have abandoned the secure quiet of his rural retreat. But a strong sense of public duty, and, no doubt, a keen delight in the clash of arms, inspired him, and he laid about him with hearty good-will; his blows, wherever they fell, leaving significant marks behind them. A host of enemies surrounded him; the lonely warrior never 'vailed his crest.' They employed every petty artifice of annoyance; they harassed him with false warrants of arrest, sham actions, claims for fictitious debts. Anonymous letter-writers threatened his life; his moral character was exposed to the vilest insinuations; his principles and conduct were grossly misrepresented. Still he maintained his gallant fight for liberty. In his *Hymn to Peace* (1706) he alludes pathetically to his loneliness:—

'Storms of men,
Voracious and unsatisfied as Death,
Spoil in their hands, and poison in their breath,
With rage of devils hunt me down.'

But the sturdy, resolute, solitary man abated not one jot of heart or hope. It is interesting to find him, amidst all this hurly-burly, pausing to compile the first of his fictitious narratives—the first of those realistic fictions which are the most characteristic product of his genius—*The True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs Veal, the next day after her Death, to one Mrs Bargrave, at Canterbury.* Prefixed, as a bookseller's artifice, to the fourth edition of that inconceivably dull and dreary book, Drelincourt *On Death*, it secured for it a tremendous popularity. Everybody read it; a good many people believed it. Improbable as are the incidents, they are told with such an exquisite simplicity, such a matter-of-fact composure, and such an air of truth, that even the critical reader is almost imposed upon. There is just a possibility that Defoe himself believed in them.

'Of all the fictions,' says Mr Leslie Stephen, 'which Defoe has succeeded in palming off as truths, none is more instructive than that admirable ghost, Mrs Veal. It is, as it were, a hand-specimen, in which we may study his *modus operandi* on a convenient scale. Like the sonnets of some great poets, it contains in a few lines all the essential peculiarities of his art. The first device which strikes us is his ingenious plan for manufacturing corroborative evidence. The ghost appears to Mrs Bargrave. The story of the apparition is told by a "very sober and understanding gentlewoman, who lives within a few doors of Mrs Bargrave;" and the character of this sober gentlewoman is supported by the testimony of a justice of peace at Maidstone, "a very intelligent person." This elaborate chain of evidence is intended to divert our attention from the obvious circumstance that the whole story rests upon the authority of the anonymous person who tells us of the sober gentlewoman, who supports Mrs Bargrave, and is informed by the intelligent justices.'

Another device, not less successfully worked out, is the narrator's assumption of impartiality.

The author, as Mr Leslie Stephen remarks, affects to take us into his confidence, to make us privy in regard to the *pros* and *cons* of his own characters, till we are quite disarmed. The sober gentlewoman vouches for Mrs Bargrave; but Mrs Bargrave is by no means allowed to have it all her own way. Mr Veal is brought in, apparently to throw discredit on her character; but his appearance is so well managed, that it makes us more rather than less inclined to accept Mrs Bargrave's story.

The argument is finally clinched by a decisive coincidence. The ghost wears a silk dress. In the course of a long conversation, she incidentally mentioned to Mrs Bargrave that this was a scoured silk, newly made up. When Mrs Bargrave reported this remarkable circumstance to a certain Mrs Wilson, 'You have certainly seen her,' exclaimed that lady, 'for none knew but Mrs Veal and myself that the gown had been scoured!' To this crushing piece of evidence, it seems that neither Mr Veal (nor any other assailant of Mrs Bargrave) could have any sufficient reply. One can almost fancy Defoe chuckling as he concocted the refinements of this most marvellous narrative.

Defoe's poem of *Jure Divino* was published on the 20th of July, 1706. The reasoning in it is, as Forster says, much better than the poetry, though the verse is vigorous enough; but it was its bold advocacy of constitutional principles that won its popularity. This and other works justify us in looking upon Defoe as the real founder of the Whig party and policy as afterwards represented by Fox, Huskisson, Grey, and Russell.

Defoe always prided himself, and justly, on the part he took in promoting the Union of England and Scotland—a part of some usefulness, if not brilliant or conspicuous. Harley and Godolphin sent him on a confidential mission to Scotland, the duties of which he discharged with fidelity and good sense. He seems to have gained the esteem of the Scotch officials and illustrious Scotchmen with whom he came in contact; and he certainly learned to admire the Scotch character, and to sympathise with the Scotch

people. Of this great historical event he has left a clear and interesting narrative in his *History of the Union*, which is written with more than his usual care.

The constitutional problems which vexed the mind of the nation in 1713 led Defoe to try his hand once more at political irony, and in quick succession he issued three pamphlets, with the sensational titles, designed to entrap Jacobite readers, of *Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover—What if the Pretender should Come?*—and *An Answer to a Question that Nobody thinks of—viz., But what if the Queen should die?* It was unfortunate for their author that his irony was understood by neither Whigs nor Tories. He was for a second time imprisoned in Newgate, and to obtain release, had to find bail, himself in eight hundred pounds, and two friends in four hundred pounds each, to answer for the alleged libels (1713). Through the influence of the Lord Treasurer, however, he obtained a pardon under the Great Seal, relieving him from the charges brought against him, and exempting him from any consequences thereafter on account of those publications, which were all written in the interest of the Protestant Succession.

The persecution of which he so long had been the object was continued after the accession of George I., for in his sturdy independence he had not scrupled to denounce the errors of the Whigs, when occasion arose, and had stoutly defended the principle of commercial treaties which the Whig leaders had thought fit to contest. Failing in health and beset by enemies, he published, in 1735, his *Appeal to Honour and Justice, being a True Account of his Conduct in Public Affairs.* Apprehending that his death was not far distant, he desired to even accounts with the world, that no action might lie against his heirs, to disturb them in the peaceable possession of their father's inheritance, his character. And he declared, with grave emphasis,—'I was, from my first entering into

the knowledge of public matters, and have ever been to this day, a sincere lover to the constitution of my country —zealous for liberty and the Protestant interest: but a constant follower of moderate principles, and a vigorous opposer of hot measures in all. I never once changed my opinion, my principles, or my party; and, let what will be said of changing sides, this I maintain, that I never once deviated from the Revolution principles, nor from the doctrine of liberty and toleration on which it was founded.' He added:—'It has been the disaster of all parties in this nation to be very hot in their turn, and as often as they have been so, I have differed from them all, and ever must and shall do so.' Before the *Appeal* was finished, its author was struck with apoplexy; and the publisher, after a six weeks' delay, issued it as it stood, prefacing it with a note, that 'in the opinion of most who knew him, the treatment which he here complains of, and others of which he would have spoken, have been the cause of this disaster.'

Retiring to a house in the then pleasant neighbourhood of Stoke Newington, Defoe gradually recovered his health, and published *The Family Instructor, in Three Parts*—a book containing much sensible advice to fathers and children, masters and servants, husbands and wives, and reminding us in a very forcible manner of the genuine nature, the unaffected piety, and the profound homeliness of its author. His restoration to health was the signal for renewed literary activity. In 1717 appeared his *History of the Wars of Charles XII., King of Sweden*, and in 1718, the second series of *The Family Instructor, in Two Parts: Part I., Relating to Family Breaches, and the Obstructing Religious Duties; II., To the Great Mistake of Mixing the Passions in the Managing and Correcting of Children.* In 1719 this battle-worn man took a new departure, and on the 25th of April published *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of*

York, Mariner.[1] I need not dwell upon the fact that the foundation of Defoe's immortal fiction was the story of Alexander Selkirk, who had resided alone upon Juan Fernandez Island from September 1704 to February 1709. It matters little whether Defoe read it in Captain Woodes Rogers's account of his *Cruising Voyage Round the World*, or in the version of it given by Sir Richard Steele in the twenty-sixth number of *The Englishman*. There can be no doubt that it furnished the germ which Defoe developed into so surprising a result. But, after all, the main incidents, as well as the minute details,—the dramatic scenes and romantic episodes,—are due to his own fertile and inventive genius. I say 'inventive'; for I believe Defoe had no imagination. The romance and the breath of poetry which are certainly present in *Robinson Crusoe*, are inseparable from the nature of the story, and were not given to it by Defoe. A lonely island in far-away seas, inhabited by a solitary human being—the idea is poetry itself, but was supplied to him by Selkirk's actual experience. What Defoe excels in, is the inexhaustible and rare ingenuity which enables him to crowd his canvas with appropriate details, all tending to deepen the impression on the reader's mind, and to convince him of the truth and reality of that which is before him. This impression is still further strengthened by the prosaic, matter-of-fact treatment which Defoe adopts. No power of analysing character was his; he was incapable of tracing the conflict of emotions, or the evolution of passions; he could not create any hero or heroine with a touch of life, except, perhaps, Crusoe and the faithful Friday. His genius was great, but it was limited; happily he knew its limitations, and never attempted anything beyond his means. He was too shrewd to attempt to rise to a height at which he could not sustain himself.

[1] The first edition bears for imprint, 'London: Printed for W. Taylor at he Ship, in Paternoster Row, 1719.'

It is too late in the day to criticise *Robinson Crusoe*. Its place in our English literature is permanent and assured. As Mr Leslie Stephen says, it is precisely the story adapted to Defoe's strength and weakness. 'He is forced to be artistic in spite of himself. He cannot lose the thread of the narrative and break it into disjointed fragments, for the limits of the island confine him as well as his hero. He cannot tire us with the details, for all the details of such a story are interesting. . . . When we add that the whole book shows the freshness of a writer employed on his first novel—though at the mature age of fifty-eight—seeing in it an allegory of his own experiences embodied in the scenes which most interested his imagination, we see some reasons why *Robinson Crusoe* should hold a distinct rank by itself amongst his works.' The best panegyric upon it is, that for a century and a half it has pleased all the boys in Europe. But it is a book for the young; and I don't think that in middle age we care for it greatly.

The success of *Robinson Crusoe* was immediate and immense. A second edition was published only seventeen days after the first, a third edition twenty-five days later, and a fourth on the 8th of August.

Having hit upon this new vein of intellectual resource, Defoe worked it with his customary energy. On the 20th of August appeared *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: being the Second and Last Part of his Life, and of the Strange Surprising Accounts of his Travels round Three Parts of the Globe.* This is distinctly inferior to the first part, and in some places very wearisome reading. And the third part, supplying a kind of moral to the story, *Serious Reflections during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe; with his Vision of the Angelick World*, is still duller and drearier, and there is no reason in the world why the name of Robinson Crusoe should be tacked on it.

In October 1719 the unresting pen of our lonely man of letters produced *The Dumb Philosopher; or, Great Britain's Wonder*, and in 1720, *The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr Duncan Campbell*, who was not only dumb, but deaf. To the latter year belongs his *Memoirs of a Cavalier; or, a Military Journal of the Wars in Germany, and the Wars in England, from the Year* 1632 *to the Year* 1648, which more people than the great Earl of Chatham have accepted as an authentic narrative. The truth would seem to be, that it is fiction relieved by a good many authentic anecdotes which Defoe had doubtlessly picked up in the course of his long and varied experiences of life. In 1720 the indefatigable man also gave to the world *The Life, Adventures, and Pyracies of the famous Captain Singleton;* which, I think, in a cheap reprint, would probably find a good many readers even now. On the 27th of January 1722 appeared *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders;* and on the 17th of March, that which I venture to think the finest of Defoe's fictions, *A Journal of the Plague Year*. In this, as in *Robinson Crusoe*, the subject raised him above himself. The horror of the pictures is so great that meanness or vulgarity of detail becomes simply impossible. The art of Defoe is very much like that of the photographer, and the effect it produces depends very much upon the object treated. Therefore, the *Journal of the Plague* saddens and terrifies us, while *Moll Flanders* repels and disgusts. It is for this reason that one cannot feel attracted by *The Life of Colonel Jack* (1722), who was 'six-and-twenty years a thief;' the details are too coarse, harsh, and sordid.

The value of what has emphatically been called 'Thieves' Literature' may well be doubted; though it is true that Defoe, unlike some of our later novelists, always paints vice as it is, vice in all its miserable degradation, making no attempt to idealise it, or to render it attractive by meretricious colouring. Defoe has been censured for

his choice of subjects; but he chose, naturally enough, those which would satisfy the public taste, and undoubtedly he believed that, at the same time, he was promoting the interests of morality. That minute realistic style of his, moreover, was adapted only to themes of a low range and scope. He could no more have dealt with the higher passions of humanity than Ostade could have painted a 'Transfiguration,' or Jan Steen a 'Madonna.'

The last of his novels—and, from a moral as well as an artistic point of view, the least defensible—appeared in March 1724, with the title of *The Fortunate Mistress; or, a History of the Life and Vast Variety of Fortunes of Mademoiselle de Bolau; afterwards called the Countess of Windersheim, in Germany. Being the Person known by the name of the Lady Roxana, in the Time of King Charles II.*

It was long supposed that Defoe's political career terminated soon after the accession of George I.; but Mr Lee has proved that he continued to labour assiduously as a politician, while producing his novels at a rate of rapidity scarcely equalled by the most prolific of Victorian lady-writers. He has shown, too, that Defoe was employed and paid by the Government to write in the Tory papers, professedly as a Tory, but really in skilful and cautious advocacy of the Ministerial measures. 'In considering,' he says, 'which way I might be rendered most useful to the Government, it was proposed by my Lord Townshend that I should still appear as if I were as before, under the displeasure of the Government, and separated from the Whigs, and that I might be more serviceable in a kind of disguise, than if I appeared openly.' It is difficult to conjecture by what kind of casuistical reasoning a man of Defoe's sturdy morality reconciled this course of deception and *espionage* to his conscience. His finer sensibilities of right and wrong must have been dulled, I suppose, by the prolonged political warfare in which he had been involved;

and the persecution he had endured at the hands of the Tories may have rendered him less scrupulous as to the means employed to injure and defeat them. It was in *Mist's Journal*, a well-known Tory paper, and the organ of the Jacobite interest, that his contributions chiefly appeared (from 1717 to 1724); but he also wrote for *The Whitehall Evening Post*, the *Daily Post*, *Applebee's Weekly Journal*, and *The Director*. Mr Lee offers a defence for this duplicity which is ingenious, but hardly convincing. The reader, however, shall have it put before him:—

> The rebellion was yet smouldering, though subdued; and the laws, liberties, and religion of the country were threatened. This weekly journal [*Mist's*], inspired from the court of the Pretender, and supported by the money and intelligence of attainted nobles abroad, and their adherents at home, had laboured to keep alive the spirit of treason until circumstance should be favourable for again spreading the flames of rebellion through the land. If, therefore, moral persuasion is more effectual than legal repression, and prevention better than cure, then no stigma, beyond that of concealment, attaches to the character of De Foe on account of his connection with *Mist's Journal*. Rather should we admire the intellectual power capable of holding in check such men as Ormond, Atterbury, Bolingbroke, Mar, Wharton, and their satellites, among the Jacobite and Nonjuring writers. It required a large amount of patriotic courage to place himself as an impassable barrier between the invectives of such men and the reading public; and no less reservation and tact in exercising this influence in such a manner as to avoid suspicion. He closes one of his letters with a favourite expression from Scripture, frequently cited in his writings, showing the sensitiveness of his mind, even as to the concealment necessary to the efficient service of his country. His words evince that he was conscious of the danger and difficulties of his duties; and also that his position was a questionable one; but there is no invidious self-reflection involved when he says:—'Thus I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, and most humbly recommend myself to his lordship's protection, or I may be undone the sooner, by how much the more faithfully I execute the commands I am under.'

But, after all, the essence of this *apologia* is the old Jesuitical maxim, that the end justifies the means; and a

defence based on the principle of expediency necessarily falls to the ground, when it is judged by the moral law.

It is said that our industrious and energetic penman wrote no fewer than two hundred and fifty-four separate works, and he seems to have ventured into every field of literature except the drama. The reader would gain nothing by an enumeration of their titles, and a large majority were, of course, ephemeral in their character. To a few, which possess a special merit of their own, or are interesting ing in connection with their author's individuality, I shall briefly refer him. For example, to his translation, in verse, of Du Fresnoy's *Compleat Art of Painting*, 1720; *Religious Courtship: being Historical Discourses on the Necessity of Marrying Religious Husbands and Wives only*, 1722; his valuable and entertaining *Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, an account of journeys actually accomplished in 1724-1726; *A New Voyage Round the World*, 1725; *The Compleat English Tradesman*, 2 vols., 1725-1727, a manual abounding in shrewd advice in Defoe's most characteristic style; *The Political History of the Devil*, 1726; *A System of Magick; or, a History of the Black Art*, 1726; *The Secrets of the Invisible World Disclosed; or, an Universal History of Apparitions, Sacred and Profane, under all Denominations*, 1728; *A New Family Instructor, in Familiar Discourses between a Father and his Children, on the most Essential Points of the Christian Religion*, a book in which the devotional side of Defoe's character is seen to advantage; and an educational tractate, very sensible and enlightened, *The Compleat English Gentleman*.

Defoe's later years were passed in pecuniary independence, and, on the whole, I think, were fairly happy. His books met with a ready acceptation at the hands of the public, and the malignancy of his enemies had to a great extent exhausted itself, while the confidence placed in him by the Government assured him of adequate pro-

tection. He suffered a good deal from the misconduct of his second son, who violated the trust placed in him by his father, and temporarily deprived the family of considerable resources. The money, however, was eventually recovered, and Defoe's last days were spent in tranquillity. Towards the close of 1730, he removed from his house at Stoke Newington, 'a commodious mansion in about four acres of ground,' to London, where he took lodgings in what was then a pleasant and respectable locality, Ropemakers' Alley, Moorfields. He did not long enjoy the change. On the evening of Monday, the 26th of April 1731, he died of a lethargy, in the 71st year of his age. It is a notable circumstance, which every student of Defoe's life must recognise, that he was an essentially solitary man. The names of Dryden, Addison, Steele, Pope, Johnson conjure up before us the groups of friends which surrounded them, the clubs which they frequented, the disciples who sat admiringly at their feet. But Defoe strides through the press a solitary figure—sternly self-reliant, friendless, uncompanioned — always alone, but always sufficient to himself—less fortunate than the castaway of his own creation, for he, at least, possessed the affection of a faithful attendant—active with a ceaseless activity, vigorous with a manly strength, but, from first to last, a lonely Man of Letters.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POETS.

Alexander Pope—Character of his Poetry—His Life—Essay on Criticism—Rape of the Lock—Translation of Homer—Essay on Man—His Last Days—Matthew Prior—His Public and Private Career—His *Vers de Société*—His Epigrams—Alma—John Gay—The Shepherd's Week—Trivia—Fables—The Beggar's Opera—His Letters.

ALEXANDER POPE.

AMONG the poets, the name which we specially identify with the Augustan, or pseudo-classical, age of English literature, is that of Alexander Pope. He is the principal representative of its tendencies, its artificialities, its wit, its knowledge of men and manners, its surface sagacity, its cynicism, and its low ideals. A great, true poet rises above and goes beyond his age, as Milton did and Wordsworth, and as, in our own time, Tennyson has done; but Pope fulfilled no such exalted mission; from first to last he remained the mirror and reflex of contemporary thought and feeling. He did not make the age, but the age made him. Nowhere in his poetry will you find any aspiration after the higher things of which the human mind is dimly conscious. Nowhere will you discover any recognition of the immense problems which press upon us, nor any attempt at their solution; even in the *Essay on Man* his philosophical reflections are at bottom the most obvious fallacies or the plainest truisms.

His philosophy is a philosophy of the present, not of the future ; his wisdom a wisdom of this world, not of the next. In his polished and glittering verse he embodies the passions and the prejudices, the sense and the sentiment, the foibles and the falsehoods of his day. His lyre has no golden chords, giving out at the touch of the skilled finger that mysterious music which appeals to the deeper sympathies and purer feelings of our nature. Pope never helps the reader to a loftier thought or a stronger emotion. His poetry never moves the heart, because there is no heart in it. It comes from the intellect—a cold, clear, and acute intellect ; but an intellect with a limited range of vision. As the late Mark Pattison puts it,—He is at his best only when he can employ the delicacies and subtle felicities of his diction in giving expression to some transient phase of contemporary feeling, or in criticising the mean motives of little men. No one impales a butterfly with a more dexterous hand than Pope. But of the wide scope of the true poet's insight,—of the love of love and the hate of hate which are the true poet's dower—his poetry has no suggestion. He has no key to the treasures of history or science ; nature he neither loved nor understood ; he could see nothing beyond the social circle which revolved around him. 'His sentiments reflect the social medium in which he lived. The complex web of society, with its indefinable shades, its minute personal affinities and repulsions, is the world in which Pope lived and moved, and which he has drawn in a few vivid lines with the keenness and intensity of which there is nothing in our literature that can compare. Clarendon's portraits in his gallery of characters are more complete and discriminating, and infinitely more candid. But they do not flash the personage, or the situation, upon the imagination, and fix it in the memory, as one of Pope's incisive lines does. He can paint with his full power only what he sees. When he attempts abstract truth, general themes, past history,

his want of knowledge makes itself felt in feeble and distorted views.'

Pope was the poet of form. He was always thinking, not of what he had to say, but of how he would say it; his anxiety was not about the thought, but about the language in which it should be clothed. He acted strictly upon his own canon of criticism:—

> 'True wit is nature to advantage dressed;
> What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.'

And he attained to such a command of expression, his skill in the use of verbal felicities was so inexhaustible, that he has been able to secure a universal currency for the merest truisms. The die is so exquisitely cast, that one forgets the mean quality of the metal. His couplets are so trimly turned, so tersely framed, that they arrest at once the memory of the public, and are transmitted, like household words, from generation to generation. Take an example:—

> 'Heaven from all creatures hides the Book of Fate,
> All but the page prescribed, their present state.'

What is there new in this utterance? It is the obvious thought of ages; but Pope has put it in so neat a setting that we go on quoting it as if it were the utterance of some prophetess from her oracular tripod.

> 'Honour and shame from no condition rise;
> Act well your part, there all the honour lies.'

Nothing, if you examine it, can be more commonplace than this; yet it is so ingeniously worded that at first it imposes upon you as if it were something novel and important. Analyse Pope's most familiar and popular sayings—the quotations which you meet as old acquaintances in any anthology—the pointed and pithy couplets which so often fill up the gaps in our conversation, and it will

soon be seen that the apparently striking truth is only a well-known truism in imposing disguise.

That Pope's form is perfect of its kind, and crowns his poetry with a fine air of distinction, is not to be denied. I own that his versification has the meritorious qualities, which he was the first to combine, of polish, strength, and fluency. He took up the ten-syllable couplet from Dryden, and made it the most artistic medium imaginable for the conveyance of worldly shrewdness and the felicities of common sense. Yet I think a great deal too much has been made of its 'musical flow.' Pope could sing only one tune. Granted that he sang it better than it had ever been sung before; yet it was not, *per se*, such a very transcendent melody after all. You have but to hear it once, and you know by heart all its tricks and turns. There are no rich intricate harmonies in it, none of those subtle cadences, those echoes of other-world music, which charm our souls in Shakespeare and Spenser, in Coleridge and Shelley, in Keats and Tennyson. Those measured couplets, with their regular beat, their punctual ebb and flow, move along with the rhythmic precision of a march of disciplined battalions, but with a monotony which after awhile grows sadly wearisome. Pope, however, knew both his strength and his weakness. He seldom ventured beyond the decasyllabic metre he had so carefully elaborated, and there are none of our greater poets who exhibit so little variety of versification.

'A great writer,' says Taine, 'is a man who, having passions, knows his dictionary and grammar; Pope thoroughly knows his dictionary and his grammar, but stopped there. People will say that this merit is small, and that I do not inspire them with a desire to read Pope's verses. True; at least I do not counsel them to read many. I would add, however, by way of excuse, that there is a kind in which he succeeds, that his descriptive and oratorical talents find in portraiture a field which suits them, and that in this he frequently approaches La Bruyère; that several of his portraits, those of Addison, Lord Hervey, Lord Wharton, the Duchess of Marlborough, are

medals worthy of finding a place in the cabinets of the curious, and of remaining in the archives of the human race; that when he chisels one of these heads, the comprehensive images, the unlooked-for connections of words, the sustained and multiplied contrasts, the perpetual and extraordinary conciseness, the incessant and increasing impulse of all the strokes of eloquence brought to bear upon the same spot, stamp upon the memory an impress which we never forget. It is better to repudiate these partial apologies, and frankly to avow that, on the whole, this great poet, the glory of his age, is wearisome —wearisome to us. "A woman of forty," says Stendbal, "is only beautiful to those who have loved her in their youth." The poor Muse in question is not forty years old for us; she is a hundred and forty. . . . Taste was transformed an age ago, for the human mind has wheeled round; with the prospect the perspective has changed; we must take this change of place into account. Now-a-days we demand new ideas and bare sentiments; we care no longer for the clothing, we want the thing. Exordium, transitions, peculiarities of style, elegances of expression, the whole literary wardrobe, is sent to the old clothes-shop: we keep only what is indispensable; we trouble ourselves no more about adornment, but about truth.'

I cannot include Pope among the greatest poets. He is, if you like, the most consummate of versifiers and the most tersely incisive of satirists: but, if imagination, and passion, and sympathy; if a consciousness of the wants and aspirations of humanity; if a sense of the burden of the mystery of this unintelligible world; if a devout recognition of beauty, and truth, and purity; if a profound insight into the teachings of Nature; if these are, as I believe, essential not only to the great but to the true poet—to whomsoever would be anything more than a manufacturer of rhymes and phrases—then I say that Pope is not a poet, and that his elaborate and polished verse, notwithstanding its brilliancies and suavities of expression, notwithstanding its dainty art, is far from being—Poetry.

ALEXANDER POPE was born in Lombard Street, London, on the 21st or 22d of May 1688. His father was a linen-draper and a Papist; his paternal grandfather, a Church

of England clergyman in Hampshire. His mother was the daughter of a gentleman of York. 'As to my father,' says Pope, in his *Letter to a Noble Lord*, 'I could assure you, my Lord, that he was no mechanic, neither a hatter, nor, which might please your lordship yet better, a cobbler, but, in truth, of a very tolerable family, and my mother of an ancient one, as well-born and educated as that lady whom your lordship made choice of to be the mother of your own children.' A sickly, delicate, and deformed child, with a temperament very nervous and sensitive, he drew to himself the inexhaustible affection of his parents, which, it must be owned, he repaid with an unusual fervour of filial devotion. His precocious talents quickly commanded recognition. At the age of eight he was placed under the charge of the family priest, from whom he gathered the rudiments of Latin and Greek. He was afterwards sent to a well-known Catholic seminary at Twyford, where he amused his leisure with the perusal of Sandys's Ovid and Ogilby's Homer. A lampoon on his master having been punished by the rod, he was removed to the academy of a Mr Dean, kept first at Marylebone, and afterwards at Hyde Park Corner. He had thus an occasional chance of a visit to the theatres; and his glimpses of the fairy world of the stage so strongly impressed him, that he composed a drama on certain incidents in the *Iliad*, interweaving verses of his own with excerpts from Ogilby. This composite production was played by the upper boys of the school, with the assistance of the master's muscular gardener as Ajax.

His father, at the accession of William and Mary, when the penal statutes were revived against Romanism, gave up trade, and purchased a small estate of about twenty acres at Binfield, on the borders of Windsor Forest. At this time Pope was about twelve years old. A priest was engaged as his tutor; but the experience of a few months proving unsatisfactory, he resolved to educate himself.

'I sat down,' he says, 'with an earnest desire of reading, and applied as constantly as I possibly could to it for some years. I was between twelve and thirteen when I first went thither, and continued in this close pursuit of pleasure and languages till nineteen or twenty. Considering how very little I had when I came from school, I think I may be said to have taught myself Latin, as well as French and Greek; and in all these my chief way of getting them was by translation . . . I went through all the best critics; almost all the English, French, and Latin poets of any name—the minor poets, Homer, and some of the greater Greek poets, in the original, and Tasso and Ariosto in translation. This I did without any design except to amuse myself; and got the languages by hunting after the stories in the several poets I read, rather than read the books to get the languages. I followed everywhere as my fancy led me, and was like a boy gathering flowers in the fields and woods, just as they fall in his way.'

Among the English poets, Spenser, Waller, and Dryden were his favourites; but it was to the author of *The Hind and the Panther* that his most loyal allegiance was given. In his boyhood he had induced a friend to carry him to town, and to Will's Coffee-House, that he might gaze upon the great poet whom he had chosen as his model. There is a dubious tradition that Dryden gave the boy a shilling for translating the narrative of Pyramus and Thisbe. He had already begun to write, and was encouraged in the habit of composition by his father. 'I lisped in numbers, he says, 'for the numbers came.' The *Ode to Solitude*, if Pope may be credited, was written when he was in his twelfth year; the most noticeable thing about it is its entire freedom from the note of juvenility. Between his thirteenth and fifteenth years he also composed a couple of plays, and an epic poem called *Alexander*, in four books, each containing about a thousand lines. 'My epic,' he says, 'was about two years in hand.' Alexander was a prince, driven from his throne by Deucalion, father of Minos, and some other Princes. It was better planned than Blackmore's *Prince Arthur;* but was as slavish an imitation of the ancients. Alexander showed all the

virtues of suffering, like Ulysses; and of courage like Æneas, or Achilles. Apollo, as the patron of Rhodes, was his great defender; and Cybele, as the patroness of Deucalion and Crete, his great enemy. She raised a storm against him in the first book, as Juno does against Æneas; and he was cast away and swam ashore, just as Ulysses does, to the island of Phæacia. A few lines from this juvenile effort have been preserved, and indicate how early he had began to form his method of versification:—

> 'Whose honours with increase of ages grow,
> As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow.'

This couplet was thought worthy of insertion in the *Essay on Criticism;* and the next found a place in *The Dunciad*:—

> 'As man's meanders to the vital spring,
> Roll all their tides, then back their circles bring.'

Among these *juvenilia* we must also refer to his translation of *The First Book of Statius*, his *Thebais*, his imitations of English poets (in which his pruriency of imagination is already conspicuous), his translation of a portion of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and of Cicero's *De Senectute*.

At the age of fifteen he resolved to visit London, in order to improve his acquaintance with French and Italian. His family, aware that Continental travel was debarred to him by his physical feebleness, considered it 'a wildish sort of resolution,' and 'could see no reason for it:' but Pope adhered tenaciously to his purpose.

His perpetual application (after he set to study of himself) reduced him in five years' time to so bad a state of health that, after trying physicians for a good while in vain, he resolved to give way to his distemper, and sat down calmly in a full expectation of death in a short time. Under this thought, he wrote letters to take a last farewell of some of his more particular friends, and, among the rest, one to the Abbé Southcote. The Abbé was extremely concerned, both for his very ill state of health and the resolution he said he had

taken. He thought there might yet be hope, and went immediately to Dr Radcliffe, with whom he was well acquainted, told him Mr Pope's case, got full directions from him, and carried them down to Pope in Windsor Forest The chief thing the doctor ordered him was to apply less, and to ride every day. The following his advice soon restored him to his health.

When he was about seventeen, his friend, Sir William Trumbull, introduced him to the dramatist Wycherley, then nearly seventy years of age. Between the old and the young man of letters something like a warm friendship soon sprang up. Writing to him on the 30th of April 1705, Pope says, with his usual elegance of expression:—

I know it is the general opinion that friendship is best contracted betwixt persons of equal age; but I have so much interest to be of another mind, that you must pardon me if I cannot forbear telling you a few notions of mine in opposition to that opinion. In the first place, it is observable that the love we bear to our friends is generally caused by our finding the same dispositions in them which we find in ourselves. This is but self-love at the bottom; whereas the affection betwixt people of different ages cannot well be so, the inclinations of such being commonly various. The friendship of two young men is often occasioned by love of pleasure or voluptuousness, each being desirous for his own sake of one to assist or encourage him in the course he pursues, as that of two old men is frequently on the score of some profit, lucre, or design upon others. Now, as a young man, who is less acquainted with the ways of the world, has in all probability less of interest; and an old man, who may be weary of himself, has, or should have, less of self-love, so the friendship between them is the more likely to be true and unmixed with too much self-regard. One may add to this, that such a friendship is of greater use and advantage to both; for the old man will grow gay and agreeable to please the young one, and the young man more discreet and prudent by the help of the old one; so it may prove a case of those epidemical diseases of age and youth, sourness and madness.

This is all very sensible, and, to some extent, true; but, on reading it, one is tempted to ask whether it can possibly be the deliverance of a lad of seventeen? But

then, perhaps, Pope, in the best sense of the word, was never young.

Wycherley was preparing for publication a new edition of his Fugitive Poems, and he entrusted the correction of them to his clever young friend, who, for nearly two years, laboured at the task of polishing them. The freedom of his emendations wounded their author's vanity, though he secretly felt compelled to acknowledge their value. At length his self-love prevailed over his critical faculty; and he broke off his intercourse with the too candid friend who would make no allowance for the egotism of an aged author.

Another of Pope's friends was the poet and critic, Mr William Walsh, of Abberley. Through Wycherley he received a copy of the young man's unpublished *Pastorals*, and was greatly impressed by their felicity of diction. Pope owed a good deal to the intelligent criticism and sound advice of this elegant scholar. 'He used to encourage me much, and to tell me that there was one way left of excelling: for though we had several great poets, we never had one great poet that was correct' [Walsh meant, of course, correct after the French style]; 'and desired me to make that my study and aim.' Pope acted too implicitely on this advice,—which, however, was sound enough in the main, the post-Elizabethan writers having run riot in metrical excesses and negligences, and neither Waller nor Dryden having succeeded in wholly arresting their baneful course.

At the house of the Englefields, Whiteknights Park, near Reading, Pope made the acquaintance of some of the literary men of the day; and it was there he first met the Blount family, of Mapledurham. With Martha Blount he formed a close and confidential intimacy, which lasted throughout his life, and contributed not a little to its happiness.

His *Pastorals*, copies of which in manuscript had been seen and admired by Lords Halifax and Somers, Con-

greve, Sir Samuel Garth, and George Granville (afterwards Lord Lansdowne), were published in 1709, in a volume of Tonson's *Miscellanies*, together with the *Pastorals* of Ambrose Phillips. Their melodious warble caught at once the ear of the public, who perceived that a singer of promise had risen above the horizon. But a much warmer and more justifiable admiration was bestowed on the *Essay on Criticism*, which, after anxious elaboration, he gave to the world in 1711. At first, it is said, its sale was slow; but, about a month after its appearance, Pope went into his publisher's shop, and having tied up twenty copies, addressed them to the best judges of poetry in town; among others to Lord Lansdowne and the Duke of Buckingham. Thus the poem got talked about, and soon floated on the tide of an increasing popularity.

It has justly been said that this new *Ars Poetica* is the kind of poem a man might be expected to write at the end of his career, when he could draw upon the stores of a ripe experience; and one cannot but look with surprise at the young poet who makes such a work his starting-point,—laying down the rules and developing the methods of good writing, setting up a standard of taste, and expounding the canons of criticism as if he had grown grey at his desk. It follows that the self-imposed task is imperfectly done; but the wonder is that it should have been done at all. It is impossible not to admire the audacity of the young man of twenty-one who thus coolly proceeded to formulate the laws of writing in verse, and mixed up with so much easy confidence the commonplaces he had collected from the French critics, giving them by his exquisite art an air of novelty, and rendering them into such compact couplets, that they were readily seized by the public memory. As, for example:—

> 'Words are like leaves; and when they most abound,
> Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.'

'A needless Alexandrine ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.'

'True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.'

''Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense.'

'Thus wit, like faith, by each man is applied
To one small sect, and all are damned beside.'

In this *Essay on Criticism*, Pope's versification is by no means faultless. The rhymes show but little variety, and are often mere assonances; while the expression is sometimes so involved as to be almost unintelligible.

Let us note that it embroiled Pope in the first of the literary quarrels which made up so large a part of his life. Truculent John Dennis, playwright, poetaster, and critic —author of the portentous tragedy called *Appius and Virginia*,—fitted upon his head the cap which Pope had deftly constructed for him:—

'. . . Appius reddens at each word you speak,
And stares tremendous, with a threatening eye,
Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry.'

A story is told—by Pope himself—to the effect that Dennis, finding the new poem on Lintot's counter, read a page or two with many frowns, until he reached the couplet,—

'Some have at first for wits, then poets passed,
Turned critics next, and proved plain fools at last,'

when he dashed the volume down with great violence, exclaiming, 'He means mé, by G—!'

The veracity of the anecdote may well be doubted; but, at all events, Dennis thought he had grounds of complaint against Pope,—whom he attacked, with his usual furious extravagance, in a pamphlet, entitled, *Reflections, Critical and Satirical, upon a late Rhapsody, called an Essay*

upon Criticism. Thenceforward he clung to the poet with the tenacious grasp of a bull-dog.

The *Essay on Criticism* marks the starting-point of Pope's literary career. 'What will this consummate musician,' says Taine, 'who begins by a treatise on harmony, make of his incomparable mechanism and his science as a teacher?' And answering his own question, he continues:—

It is well to feel and think before writing; a full source of living ideas and real passions is necessary to make a genuine poet, and in him, seen closely, we find that everything, to his very person, is scanty and artificial; he was a dwarf, four feet high, contorted, hunch-backed, thin, valetudinarian, appearing, when he arrived at maturity, no longer capable of existing. He could not get up himself, a woman dressed him; he wore three pairs of stockings, drawn on one over the other, so slender were his legs; when he rose, he was invested in a bodice made of stiff canvas, being scarce able to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat; next came a sort of fur doublet, for the least thing made him shiver; and lastly, a thick linen shirt, very warm, with fine sleeves. Over all this he wore a black garment, a tye-wig, a little sword; thus equipped, he went and took his place at the table of his great friend, the Earl of Oxford. He was so small, that he had to be raised on a chair of his own; so bald, that when he had no company he covered his head with a velvet cap; so punctilious and exacting, that the footmen evaded going his errands, and the Earl had to discharge several 'for their resolute refusal of his messages.' At dinner he ate too much; like a spoiled child, he would have highly-seasoned dishes, and thus "would oppress his stomach with repletion." When cordials were offered him, he got angry, but did not refuse them. He had all the appetite and whims of an old child, an old invalid, an old author, an old bachelor. We are prepared to find him whimsical and susceptible. He often, without saying a word, and without any known cause, quitted the house of Lord Oxford, and the footman had to go repeatedly with messages to bring him back. He was as crafty and malignant as a nervous abortion, which he was; when he wanted anything, he dared not ask for it plainly; with hints and contrivances of speech he induced people to mention it, to bring it forward, after which he would make use of it. Thus he teased Lord Orrery till he obtained a swan. He hardly drank tea without a

stratagem. Lady Bolingbroke used to say that 'he played the politician about cabbages and turnips.'

This strange, wayward, deformed, and stunted little creature, who was nevertheless so consummate a musician, published, in 1712, and in Lintot's *Miscellany*, what always appears to me his most perfect poem, *The Rape of the Lock*. In its original form, it consisted of two cantos of only three hundred and twenty lines; and its author, in imitation of his model, Boileau's *Le Lutrin*, styled it 'an heriocomical poem.' It was founded upon a trifling incident, which had caused a very needless feeling of hostility to spring up between two prominent Catholic families, both of which were known to Pope. 'The stealing of Miss Bella Fermor's hair [by young Lord Petre] was taken too seriously,' he says, 'and a common acquaintance and well-wisher to both [Ex-Secretary Caryll] desired me to write a poem to make a jest of it, and laugh them together again. It was with this view that I wrote *The Rape of the Lock*, which was well received, and had its effect in the two families. . . . The machinery was added afterwards, to make it a little more considerable, and the scheme of adding it was much liked and approved of by several of my friends, and particularly by Dr Garth: who, as he was one of the best-natured men in the world, was very fond of it.' It was in 1714 that, embellished with the delicate machinery of the Sylphs, so happily adopted from the Rosicrucians, *The Rape of the Lock* appeared in its present form—'a perfect chrysolite,' of which our literature has no other example.

Surely it is not possible to praise its merits too highly—its refined suggestion of burlesque, its delicate humour, its still more delicate wit, its sportive fancy, its air of high-bred courtesy and grace, its felicitous choice of epithet and phrase. It would be difficult to find in English poetry any passage in which sound and sense are more happily mated than the following. The right word is always in

the right place. You feel that the slightest alteration would mar and blur the exquisitely woven texture:—

'Not with more glories in th' ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams,
Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs, and well-drest youths around her shone,
But every eye was fixed on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes and as unfixed as those.
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if Belles had faults to hide.
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look in her face, and you'll forget 'em all.
This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourished two locks which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth ivory neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slave detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey.
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.'

Criticism has been unanimous upon the merits of this epic of the boudoir and the toilet-table. Addison pronounced it a delicious little thing—'*merum sal*.' De Quincy declared it to be 'the most exquisite monument of playful fancy that universal literature offers.' According to Hazlitt, it is 'the most exquisite specimen of filigree work ever invented. It is made of gauze and silver spangles. The most glittering appearance is given to everything; to paste, pomatum, billets-doux, and patches.

Airs—languid airs breath around ; the atmosphere is perfumed with affectation. A toilet is described with the solemnity of an altar raised to the goddess of vanity, and the history of a silver bodkin is given with all the pomp of heraldry. No pains are spared, no profusion of ornament, no splendour of poetic diction, to set off the meanest things.' Lastly, Professor Conington is of opinion that 'there can be little to be said about a poem so exquisite in its peculiar style of art as to make the task of searching for faults almost hopeless, that of commanding beauties simply impertinent.'

But it is well to recognise the subtle satire, the cynical irony of the poem. It is levelled at woman, whom it was the fashion of the age, and the delight of the poet, to depreciate. He laughs at her throughout—with a veiled but not the less an insulting laughter. She is depicted as a creature absorbed in the details of her toilet ; her outward charms are paraded with impertinent flattery, while her 'inward frivolity' is mercilessly exposed. She can think or talk only of the most trivial subjects :—

> 'One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
> And one describes a charming Indian screen ;
> A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes ;
> At every word a reputation dies.
> Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
> With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.'

Observe the sweeping contempt of this comprehensive phrase—'and all that!' Yet in the poet's circle figured many women who had a right to expect from the poet a higher and truer view of their sex.

The Messiah, a gew-gaw imitation of Virgil's *Pollio*, *The Dying Christian to his Soul*, and *The Temple of Fame* (suggested by Chaucer's *House of Fame*), were first printed in 1712 ; and about the same time was composed the *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*, the origin of which is still involved in a mystery which it hardly

seems worth while to attempt to penetrate. *Windsor Forest*, which contains some of Pope's best descriptive passages, was published in 1713, but the greater part of it had been written in 1704. To the same year belongs his admirable prologue to Addison's 'Cato'; and his prose vindication of his friend and fellow-poet, the coarsely humorous *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris of the Frenzy of J. D.* (John Dennis), for which Addison thanked him so little. The *Ode on St Cecilia's Day* was also published in this year.

The work on which Pope's reputation and influence with his contemporaries rested was his translation of the *Iliad*,—a work begun as early as 1713, for in that year we find Swift eagerly canvassing for subscribers to it. At first he felt it as a burden, which weighed heavily on his energies; but as he soon attained a rare facility of composition, it became thenceforward an agreeable pastime. He tells Spence:—

'The *Iliad* took me up six years; and during that time, and particularly the first part of it, I was often under great pain and apprehension. Though I conquered the thoughts of it in the day, they would frighten me in the night. I sometimes still can dream of being engaged in that translation; and got about half way through it; and being embarrassed, and under dread of never completing it . . . When I fell into the method of translating thirty or forty verses before I got up, and piddled with it the rest of the morning, it went on easy enough; and when I was thoroughly got into the way of it, I did the rest with pleasure . . . I wrote most of the *Iliad* fast; a great deal of it on journeys, from the little pocket Homer on that shelf there; and often forty or fifty verses in a morning in bed. . . . In translating both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, my usual method was to take advantage of the first heat; and then to correct each book, first by the original text, then by other translations; and lastly to give it a reading for the versification only.'

In June 1715 the first volume was ready. The whole work comprised six quarto volumes, at the price of six guineas. Pope's friends had commanded in all six hundred

and fifty-four copies; these, Lintot, who had secured the copyright, agreed to supply at his own expense, and to pay besides a sum of twelve hundred pounds; so that Pope's remuneration amounted to the splendid sum of five thousand three hundred and twenty pounds six shillings.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the qualities of the poet's work. Posterity has made up its mind that while conspicuous as a masterpiece of finished versification, it renders neither the spirit nor the language of Homer. Pope's Iliad is an Iliad of the eighteenth century; utterly alien to Greek sentiment and Greek taste; Homer in a peruke and ruffles, in flowered waistcoat and knee-breeches. In such a masquerade, it is difficult to recognise the old Hellenic poet; and I am sure he would have had much difficulty in recognising himself.

It was in this year of success that Pope, having persuaded his father to sell the small property of Binfield, removed with his parents to Twickenham, where he had purchased a villa on the banks of the Thames, with its entrance from the Teddington road. Here he resided for the remainder of his life, embellishing the garden and constructing his famous grotto. Shortly after his father's death in 1717, he took a lease of the house, with about five acres of ground, which, with the assistance of Kent and Bridgman, the two great landscape gardeners of the day, and the counsel of Lord Peterborough and other eminent amateurs, he converted into a bit of Arcady. He was the first to break through the formal monotony of the Dutch style, popularised by William III., and seek his inspiration from Nature. From his letters, it is evident that he took up this occupation in quite a serious spirit. To Lord Stafford he writes (October 5, 1725):—'I am as busy in three acres of gardening as any man can be in three score acres. I fancy myself like the fellow that spent his life in cutting the twelve apostles in a cherry stone. I have a

Theatre, an Arcade, a Bowling-green, a Grove, and what not; in a bit of ground that would have been but a plate of sallet to Nebuchadnezzar the first day he was turned to grass.' Again, to Lord Oxford (March 22, 1726):—'I have turfed a Bridgmannick theatre myself. It was done by a detachment of his [Bridgman's] workmen for the Prince's visit, all at a stroke, and it is yet unpaid for, but that is nothing with a poetical genius.' In the first of his Satires he acknowledges Lord Peterborough's assistance:—

> 'And he whose lightning pierced th' Iberian lines,
> Now forms my quincunx and now ranks my vines;
> Or tames the genius of the stubborn plain,
> Almost as quickly as he conquered Spain.'

Horace Walpole bears his testimony to the successful result of the poet's assiduous labours.

'Mr Pope,' he says, 'undoubtedly contributed to form Kent's taste. The design of the Prince of Wales's garden at Carlton House was evidently borrowed from the poet's at Twickenham. There was a little of affected modesty in the latter, when he said, of all his works he was most proud of his garden. And yet it was a singular effort of art and taste to impress so much variety and scenery on a spot of five acres. The passing through the gloom from the grotto to the opening day, the retiring and again assembling shades, the dusky groves, the larger lawn, and the solemnity of the termination of the cypresses that led up to his mother's tomb, are arranged with exquisite judgment; and though Lord Peterborough assisted him

> "To form his quincunx and to rank his vines,"

these were not the most pleasing ingredients of his little perspective.'

The space between the river and the house was occupied by a lawn, fenced in by a hedge and background of trees. On the London side the hedge was curved towards the river, decorated with terminal busts, and with an alcove which commanded a fine view of the Thames valley. Over against the alcove, on the other side, stood a large willow—the second weeping willow planted in England.

Beneath the house and the high road to Teddington, the poet constructed a tunnel as a means of communication between the lawn and the garden, which was on the other side of the road, and converted it with 'spars, minerals, and marbles' into

> 'The Ægerian grot
> Where, nobly pensive, St John sat and thought;
> Where British sighs from dying Wyndham stole,
> And the bright flame was shot through Marchmont's soul.'

The poet's description of his grotto is well-known. We can quote but a portion of it:—

I have put the last hand to my works of this kind, in happily finishing the subterraneous way and grotto: I there found a spring of the clearest water, which falls in a perpetual rill, that echoes thro' the cavern day and night. From the river Thames, you see thro' my arch up a walk of the wilderness to a kind of open temple, wholly composed of shells in the rustic manner; and from that distance under the temple you look down thro' a sloping arcade of trees, and see the sails on the river passing suddenly and vanishing, as thro' a perspective glass. When you shut the doors of this grotto, it becomes on the instant, from a luminous room, a *camera obscura;* on the walls of which all the objects of the river, hills, woods, and boats are forming a moving picture in their visible radiations; and when you have a mind to light it up, it affords you a very different scene; it is finished with shells interspersed with pieces of looking-glass in angular forms; and in the ceiling is a star of the same material, at which, when a lamp (of an orbicular figure of thin alabaster) is hung in the middle, a thousand pointed rays glitter and are reflected over the place. There are connected to this grotto by a narrower passage two porches, one towards the river, of smooth stones, full of light, and open; the other toward the garden, shadowed with trees, rough with shells, flints, and iron-ore. The bottom is paved with simple pebble, as is also the adjoining walk up the wilderness to the temple, in the natural taste, agreeing not ill with the little dripping murmur, and the aquatic idea of the whole place.

Pope's poetry always reminds us of his grotto; a thousand pointed rays glitter and reflect over it; but when you come to examine how the effects are produced, you

find that they are not spontaneous but artificial, and that the materials are nothing better than spar and shells, flint and iron-ore.

We have already alluded to the feud between Pope and Addison which sprang out of his translation of the *Iliad*. The reader will find the whole story told pleasantly enough in the elder Disraeli's *Quarrels of Authors;* also a defence of Addison in Macaulay's well-known Essay; and an examination into its rise and progress, conducted on an exhaustive scale by Mr Whitwell Elwin. We pass on to the poet's association with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in which the worst side of the poet's character comes out very disagreeably.

Pope had been some time acquainted with her before she went abroad, in June 1716, and during her absence on the Continent they kept up a lively correspondence. That piece of sensuous verse, *The Epistle from Eloise to Abelard*, printed and published in 1717, contains in its concluding lines a distinct reference to the lady whose wit and beauty had made so deep an impression upon him. In 1718 Lady Mary returned to London, of the society of which she was well fitted to become one of the leaders and ornaments. Still in the early maturity of womanhood, her personal charms were dazzling; but of these I have spoken in a preceding chapter. It is convenient to repeat that her accomplishments were many, her manners easy, graceful, and assured; her conversation, always witty and agreeable, had gained additional attractions from the stores of anecdote and observation she had accumulated during foreign travel. It is no wonder that such a woman found a host of admirers; not much wonder, perhaps, that she was not averse to admiration.

Pope hastened to welcome her return in language which was rhapsodical, perhaps, but certainly sincere; employing, however, a startling frankness of speech which

now-a-days our Lady Marys, if we had any, would, we hope, refuse to tolerate:—

'I prodigiously long,' he writes, 'for your sonnets, your remarks, your oriental learning; but I long for nothing so much as your oriental self. You must of necessity be *advanced* so far *back* into true nature and simplicity of manners, by these three years' residence in the East, that I shall look upon you as so many years younger than you were, so much nearer innocence (that is, truth), and infancy (that is, openness). I expect to see your soul as much thinner dressed as your body; and that you have left off, as unwieldy and cumbersome, a great many European habits. Without offence to your modesty be it spoken, I have a burning desire to see your soul stark-naked, for I am confident 'tis the prettiest kind of white soul in the universe. But I forget whom I am talking to; you may possibly by this time believe, according to the prophet, that you have none; if so, show me that which comes next to a soul; you may easily put it upon a poor ignorant Christian for a soul, and please him as well with it—I mean your heart. Mahomed, I think, allows you hearts; which (together with fine eyes and other agreeable equivalents) are worth all the souls on this side the world. But if I must be content with seeing your body only; God send it to come quickly. I honour it more than the diamond-casket that held Homer's *Iliad;* for in the very twinkle of one eye of it there is more wit, and in the very dimple of one cheek of it there is more meaning, than all the souls that ever were casually put into women.' . . .

Mr Pope goes on to tell the story of the two rural lovers struck by lightning in the hayfield, which, sad to relate, he appropriated from Gay, and he adds an epitaph which he professes to have written for their tomb at Stanton Harcourt. Lady Mary (on the 10th of November) replied to the letter, and criticised the epitaph, the bad taste and far-fetched conceit of which she evidently felt, and was willing to ridicule:—

I must applaud your good nature in supposing that your pastoral lovers (vulgarly called haymakers) would have lived in everlasting joy and harmony, if the lightning had not interrupted their scheme of happiness. I see no reason to imagine that John Hughes and Sarah Drew were either wiser or more virtuous than their neighbours. That a 'well-set man' of twenty-five should have a fancy to marry a

'brown woman' of eighteen, is nothing marvellous; and I cannot help thinking, that had they married, their lives would have been passed in the common track with their fellow-parishioners. His endeavouring to shield her from a storm was a natural action, and what he would have certainly done for his horse, if he had been in the same situation. Neither am I of opinion that their sudden death was a reward of their mutual virtue.

She subjoins an epitaph, an audacious burlesque, which she thinks more just, if less poetical, than his own. We quote a few lines:—

> 'Here lie John Hughes and Sarah Drew;
> Perhaps you'll say, what's that to you?
> Believe me, friend, much may be said
> On this poor couple that are dead.
> On Sunday next they should have married;
> But see how oddly things are carried!
> On Thursday last it rained and lightened;
> Those tender lovers, sadly frightened,
> Sheltered beneath the cocking hay,
> In hopes to pass the time away;
> But the bold thunder found them out
> (Commissioned for that end, no doubt),
> And, seizing on their trembling breath,
> Consigned them to the shades of death.'

Lady Mary went to live at Saville House, Twickenham, near Pope's villa, gathering around her a coterie of notable personages. Amongst them was the brilliant Lord Hervey, whose rare intellectual powers have almost been forgotten by posterity in the obloquy flung upon his memory by the satire of Pope. Lady Mary and the poet were at this time great friends, but gradually an adverse feeling sprung up between them. It was not until some years afterwards that an open rupture occurred. The cause of their quarrel can only be conjectured. As Lady Louisa Stuart says, had their disagreement made less noise and been less canvassed, it might be desirable to pass it by unnoticed; for when two persons of distinguished ability misemploy their talents and degrade themselves by striving to vilify

each other, the honest part of their admirers must feel more inclination to avert their eyes from the conflict than to engage in it as partisans on the one side or the other. I am inclined to believe that Pope's passion for Lady Mary was sincere; that he was really dazzled by her personal and intellectual accomplishments into as strong and deep an affection as it was possible for him to feel. This, too, is Leigh Hunt's opinion; but it necessarily conveys a severe condemnation upon the poet, who knew that Lady Mary was a wife and a mother. Nor does it wholly exonerate her from blame. My belief is, however, that she laughed at his impassioned letters, though I grant it would have been better if she had refused to receive them. That she returned or even encouraged his attachment there is not the slightest proof; though one may suppose that her vanity was flattered by the devotion of the greatest wit and poet of the day. The causes of the eventual rupture were probably various. I suspect that the poet found she was amusing herself with his extravagant passion; but Lady Mary's own statement is, that, at some ill-chosen time, when she least expected what romances call 'a declaration,' he made such violent love to her as, in spite of her utmost endeavours to be angry and look grave, provoked an immoderate fit of laughter; from which moment he became her implacable enemy.

Leigh Hunt exclaims:—

A pause comes upon the spirit and the tongue at hearing such an explanation as this;—a pause in which no one of any imagination can help having a deep sense of the blackness of the mortification with which the poor, misshaped, applauded poet must have felt his lustre smitten, and his future recollections degraded. To say that he had any right to make love to her is one thing; yet to believe that her manners, and cast of character, as well as the nature of the times and of the circles in which she moved, had given no licence, no encouragement, no pardoning hope to the presumption, is impossible; and to trample in this way upon the whole miserable body of his

vanity and humility, upon all which the consciousness of acceptability and glory among his fellow-creatures had given him to sustain himself, and all which in so poor, and fragile, and dwarfed, and degrading a shape, required so much to be so sustained ;—assuredly it was inexcusable,—it was inhuman.

The reader, I suspect, will refuse to be impressed by this sentimental rhetoric. How was Lady Mary to have dealt with a declaration of love made under such circumstances? Had she treated it seriously, and appealed to her husband, the physical weakness of the poet would have shielded him from chastisement. 'A little pity,' says Leigh Hunt, 'might have softened her contempt.' Pity? What for? For a gross and inexcusable insult? There is not, I repeat, the least justification for hinting that she had encouraged her would-be suitor. Her letters prove exactly the contrary. And though our critics of to-day, looking back upon the whole history, are convinced of the reality of the poet's attachment, it is quite possible that Lady Mary, accustomed to the protestations of flatterers, and knowing Pope's prodigality of compliment to his friends, never regarded it as serious. In such a case, a sudden avowal of love may well have appealed to her keen sense of the ridiculous.

What followed showed, however, that it is unwise to laugh at a great satirist. Pope's revenge was immediate and terrible, but it was also unmanly. In the days of his infatuation he had celebrated Lady Mary with great warmth of language, under the name of Sappho ; he now employed all the resources of his wit in vilifying and degrading her. The first attack, however,—in the third Epistle of the *Moral Essays*,—was rather scurrilous than witty :—

> 'Rufa, whose eye, quick-glancing o'er the park
> Attracts each light gay meteor of a spark,
> Agrees as ill with Rufa studying Locke,
> As Sappho's diamonds with her dirty smock ;

> Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,
> With Sappho fragrant at an evening masque ;
> So morning insects that in muck begun,
> Shine, buzz, and fly-blow in the setting sun.'

Even this grossness does not equal the grossness of a couplet which he introduced into his *Imitations of Horace*. We cannot quote it, and Pope himself was afterwards sufficiently ashamed of it to deny that it applied to her. In his *Letter to a Noble Lord*, he says:—'In regard to the right Honourable Lady, your Lordship's friend, I was far from designing a person of her condition by a name so derogatory to her as that of Sappho ; a name prostituted to every infamous creature that ever wrote verse or novels. I protest I never applied that name to her in any verse of mine, public or private ; and, I firmly believe, not in any letter or conversation. Whoever could invent a falsehood to support an accusation, I pity ; and whoever can believe such a character to be theirs, I pity still more.' In spite of the poet's pity, no one accepts his denial.

But this miserable quarrel has carried us away from our chronological sketch of the poet's literary work. In 1722 he began his translation of the *Odyssey*, in which he was largely assisted by Fenton and Broome. He sold the copyright to Lintot for six hundred pounds, and received payment for 574 copies subscribed at one guinea each. His long and cordial friendship with Bishop Atterbury was interrupted in 1723 by the banishment of the latter on a charge of high treason ; but, as if to compensate him for this loss, Lord Bolingbroke, whose pardon had passed under the Great Seal, returned to England, and renewed his intercourse with the poet. He took up his residence at Dawley, near Hayes, in Middlesex,—no great distance from the Twickenham villa. Pope's edition of Shakespeare, in six quarto volumes, appeared in 1726, and proved a conspicuous failure. But what other result could reasonably have been expected? Pope possessed

none of the qualifications of a successful commentator. He had no knowledge of his subject—and this defect admitted, it is needless for us to specify others. Theobald afterwards exposed his sins of omission and commission in his *Shakespeare Restored*, and in virtue of a superior critical acumen too triumphantly exhibited, was pilloried by Pope in *The Dunciad*.

Who would not have wished to have attended the symposia at Twickenham in the spring of 1726, when Swift came on a visit to his friend, and when Gay and Bolingbroke were among the guests? It was then and there that Swift gave the final touches to *Gulliver's Travels;* that Pope wrote *The Lamentations of Glumdalclitch*, and other Gulliverian verse; that *The Beggar's Opera* was originated; and that Pope and Swift concocted their *Miscellanies*. Later, in this same year, after Swift's return to Ireland, the poet had a narrow escape from a violent and premature death. Returning from Dawley, one September night, in Lord Bolingbroke's coach-and-six, he was overturned in crossing a bridge, and nearly drowned. The glasses of the coach were up, and Pope was almost asleep. On rousing, he found the water reaching to 'the knots of his periwig.' He vainly attempted to lower the glasses, and it was some time before the footman, who had stuck in the mud, came to his rescue, and dragged him through the window, which he broke for the purpose. In the *mêlée* he received a severe cut on the right hand. which deprived him of the use of two fingers. Voltaire, who at the time was in England, addressed to him the following letter on his escape:[1]—

I hear this moment of your sad adventure. That water you fell in was not Hippocrene's water, otherwise it would have respected you. Indeed, I am concerned beyond expression for the danger you have been in, and more for your wounds. Is it possible that those fingers which have written the *Rape of the Lock*, and the *Criticism*,

[1] Written at Lord Bolingbroke's, Nov. 16, 1726.

which have dressed Homer so becomingly in an English coat, should have been so barbarously treated? Let the hands of Dennis or of your poetasters be cut off; yours is sacred. I hope, sir, you are now perfectly recovered. Really, your accident concerns me as much as all the disasters of a master ought to affect his scholar.

About the end of April 1727, Swift was again at Twickenham; but his political ambition was thwarted by the increasing influence of Walpole, who held as powerful a sway in the councils of George II. as he had done in the councils of George I. In June the *Miscellanies* of Pope and Swift were published in two volumes, and eagerly welcomed; a third and a fourth volume were afterwards added. The profits, amounting to about a hundred and fifty pounds, Swift generously refused to receive any share of, relinquishing the whole to Pope. He returned to Ireland in October, and the two friends did not meet again.

The *Miscellanies* included the famous treatise by Martinus Scriblerus, entitled Περι Βαθους; or, *The Art of Sinking in Poetry*, of which certainly the greater part was written by Pope. It was designed as a portion of that larger work which, years before, had been projected by the Scriblerus Club, that is, by Pope, Swift, Dr Arbuthnot, and Lord Oxford. 'Dr Arbuthnot,' says Warburton, 'was skilled in everything which related to science; Mr Pope was a master in the fine arts; and Dr Swift excelled in the knowledge of the world. Wit they had all in equal measure, and in a measure so large, that no age, perhaps, ever produced three men on whom nature had more bountifully bestowed it, or in whom art had brought it to higher perfection.' Pope illustrated the art of sinking by apt quotations from living writers, taking care to choose from those who had been or were his assailants. In the sixth chapter, *Of the several kinds of Geniuses in the Profound, and the Works and Characters of each*, he particularises the Flying Fishes, Swallows, Ostriches, Parrots, Didappers, Porpoises,

Frogs, Eels, and Tortoises, attaching to each division the initials of the names of those writers whom it is aimed at. Pope afterwards declared, *more suo*, that, with some few exceptions, these initials were set down haphazard; but the reader would be guileless indeed if he attached any weight to the denial. His contemporaries did not; and the small authors whom he had provoked by jest and innuendo, stung into a fury of attack, buzzed and boomed around him incessantly. At length Pope resolved to chasten them with a whip of scorpions, and gibbet them before the public eye for many a generation. Conceived as early as 1720, *The Dunciad* was not written until 1727, and in its original form was published in March 1729.

'We need much self-command,' says Taine, 'not to throw down this masterpiece as insipid, and even disgusting. Rarely has so much talent been spent to produce so much *ennui*. Pope wished to be avenged on his literary enemies, and sang of Dullness, the sublime goddess of Literature, "daughter of Chaos and Eternal Night, . . . gross as her sire, and as her mother grave," queen of hungry authors, who chooses for her son and favourite, first Theobald and afterwards Cibber. There he is, a king, and to celebrate his accession she institutes public games in imitation of the ancients; first a race of booksellers, trying to seize a poet; then the struggle of the authors, who first vie with each other in braying, and then dash into the Fleet-ditch filth; then the strifes of critics, who have to undergo the reading of two voluminous authors, without falling asleep. Strange parodies, to be sure, and in truth not very striking. Who is not deafened by these hackneyed and bald allegories, Dullness, poppies, mists, and Sleep? What if I entered into details, and described the posters offered for a prize, "with cow-like udders, and with ox-like eyes;" if I related the plunges of the authors, floundering in the Fleet-ditch, the vilest sewer in the town; if I transcribed all the extraordinary verses in which—

> "First he relates how sinking to the chin,
> Smit with his mien, the mud-nymphs sucked him in:
> How young Lutetia, softer than the down,
> Nigrine black, and Merdamante brown,
> Vied for his love in jetty bowers below. . . ."

'I must stop. Swift alone might have seemed capable of writing some passages, for instance that on the fall of Curl. We might have excused it in Swift; the extremity of despair, the rage of misanthropy, the approach of madness, might have carried him to such excess. But Pope, who lived calm and admired in his villa, and who was urged only by literary rancour! He can have had no nerves! How could a poet have dragged his talent wantonly through such images, and so constrained his ingeniously-woven verses to receive such dirt! Picture a pretty drawing-room basket, destined only to contain flowers and fancy-work, sent down into the kitchen to be turned into a receptacle for filth. In fact, all the filth of literary life is here; and Heaven knows what it then was! In no age were hack-writers so beggarly and so vile. Poor fellows, like Richard Savage, who slept during one winter in the open air, on the cinders of a glass manufactory, lived on what he received for a dedication, knew the inside of a prison, rarely dined, and drank at the expense of his friends; pamphleteers like Tutchin, who was soundly whipped; plagiarists like Ward, exposed in the pillory and pelted with rotten eggs and apples; courtesans like Elizabeth Heywood, notorious by the shamelessness of their public confessions; bought journalists, hired slanderers, vendors of scandal and insults, half rogues, complete roysterers, and all the literary vermin which haunted the gambling-houses, the stews, the gin-cellars, and at a signal from a bookseller, stung honest folk for a crown-piece. These villanies, this foul linen, the greasy coat six years old, the musty pudding, and the rest, are to be fond in Pope as in Hogarth, with English coarseness and precision.'[1]

Of the mechanical part of Pope's work, however, it is almost impossible to speak too highly. The versification is vigorous, various, and wonderfully flexible; the couplet has become, in his hands, an instrument which can be made to do anything its master requires of it. The concluding passages deserve all the praise they have received. Of their kind they stand unequalled in our poetry.

> 'She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold,
> Of Night primeval and of Chaos old!

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[1] Taine, *Hist. Eng. Lit.*, iii. 350, 351.

Before her Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
And all its varying rainbows die away.
Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
The meteor drops and in a flash expires.
As, one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
The sick'ning stars fade off th' ethereal plain ;
As Argus's eyes by Hermes' wand opprest,
Closed one by one to everlasting rest ;
Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
Art after art goes out, and all is night.
See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of casuistry heaped o'er her head !
Philosophy, that leaned on heaven before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of Metaphysics begs defence,
And Metaphysic calls for aid on Sense !
See Mystery to Mathematics fly !
In vain ! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
And unawares Morality expires.
For public flame, nor private, dares to shine ;
Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine !
Lo ! thy dread empire, Chaos ! is restored ;
Light dies before thy uncreating word ;
Thy hand, great Anarch ! lets the curtain fall,
And universal darkness buries all.'

In 1731, Pope published his *Epistle on Taste*, addressed to Lord Burlington. It met with a very cordial reception, and ran through three editions in one year. In the poet's collected works it now forms the fourth of the *Moral Essays*. 'Timon's villa,' in this poem, is understood to represent Canons, the seat of the then Duke of Chandos. Pope's ill-natured meanness in ridiculing a nobleman at whose hands he had received much kindness, was strongly emphasised by his critics ; whereupon he resorted to his customary device of declaring that he had never intended to allude to the Duke in the character of Timon. This was Pope's favourite mode of procedure. He flung a handful of mud at a person, and pitilessly bespattered

him; and when charged with the outrage, asserted in solemn phrase that it had most unfortunately fallen on the wrong object.

Of the Use of Riches, addressed to Lord Bathhurst, now forming the third of the *Moral Essays*, was published in 1732; in which year also appeared the first Epistle of the *Essay on Man*, followed closely by the second Epistle. Both were issued anonymously, in order that the poet might obtain, it is said, the impartial judgment of the wits and critics, who were not likely to show any mercy to an acknowledged production of the author of *The Dunciad;* but having once spoken favourably of the *Essay*, could not afterwards retract their commendation. But it is impossible to believe that any critic could have been mistaken in the authorship of those terse and vigorous couplets, those felicitous epithets, those wonderfully-nervous phrases, those well-chosen and skilfully-applied images.

The four epistles which comprise the *Essay on Man* form the most important, and are the most celebrated of Pope's writings. They profess to represent his philosophical views, but, in reality, are an eclectic compilation of three or four systems, among which the optimism of Leibnitz's *Théodicée* is conspicuous. Man, says the poet, is only a part of the universe, and unable to comprehend all its details, or to survey the whole plan of creation. Therefore he must believe that all things are ordered for good: that whatever is, is right. The goodness of God, he contends, is shown in our very imperfections, for out of self-love springs social love, and this expands into charity. Our mutual wants bring about our mutual happiness. Order is Heaven's first law, and thence results the difference of classes; but in this difference lies no cause for individual sorrow; honour and shame are not the accidents of social condition; let each man do his duty, and therein lies the honour. 'Virtue alone is happiness below'—

that is, love of God and love of man, for in such does true virtue consist :—

> 'See the sole bliss Heaven could on all bestow !
> Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know ;
> Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,
> The bad must miss, the good untaught will find ;
> Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
> But looks through Nature up to Nature's God ;
> Pursues that chain which links th' universe design,
> Joins heaven and earth, and mortal and divine ;
> Sees that no being any bliss can know,
> But touches some above, and some below ;
> Learns from this union of the rising whole
> The first, best purpose of the human soul ;
> And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,
> All end—in love of God and love of man.'

Pope is a weak and inconsequential reasoner; he is not altogether a good moralist ; he lacks the earnestness and enthusiasm which lie at the bottom of sound morality ; and knowing what we do of his life and character, we have always an uneasy suspicion that the morality is assumed. Yet it must be admitted that the *Essay on Man* contains many passages instinct with a truly noble spirit, passages which show that at times the poet could elevate himself above the social conditions which did so much to enfeeble, or, at least, degrade his intellect.

'In the Essay,' says Leslie Stephen, 'more than in any of his other writings, we have the difficulty of separating the solid bullion from the dross. Pope is here pre-eminently parasitical, and it is possible to trace to other writers—such as Montaigne, Pascal, Leibnitz, Shaftesbury, Locke, and Wollaston—as well as to the inspiration of Bolingbroke, nearly every argument which he employs. He unfortunately worked up the rubbish as well as the gems. . . . Whilst he frequently wastes his skill in gilding refuse, he is really most sensitive to the noblest sentiments of his contemporaries, and thus, when he has good materials to work upon, his verse glows with unusual fervour, often to sink with unpleasant rapidity into mere quibbling. . . . Uncertain as is his grasp of any philosophical conceptions, Pope shows, not merely in set phrases, but in the general colouring of his poem,

something of that width of sympathy which should result from the pantheistic view. The tenderness, for example, with which he always speaks of the brute creation is pleasant in a writer so little distinguished, as a rule, by an interest in what we popularly call nature. The 'scale of being' argument may be illogical, but we pardon it when it is applied to strengthen our sympathies with our unfortunate dependants on the lower steps of the ladder. The lamb who

"Licks the hand just raised to shed his blood,"

is a second-hand lamb, and has, like so much of Pope's writing, acquired a certain tinge of banality, which must limit quotation; and the same must be said of the poor Indian, who—

"Thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog will bear him company."

But the sentiment is as right as the language (in spite of its familiarity we can still recognise the fact) is exquisite. Tolerance of all forms of faith, from that of the poor Indian upwards, is so characteristic of Pope as to have offended some modern critics who might have known better. We may pick holes in the celebrated antithesis :—

"For forms of government let fools contest;
Whate'er is best administered is best;
For forms of faith let graceless zealots fight,
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

A recent dispute in a court of justice shows that even our most cultivated men have forgotten Pope so far as to be ignorant of the source of the familiar words :—

"What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?
Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards."

It is therefore necessary to say explicitly that the poem where they occur, the fourth Epistle of the *Essay on Man*, not only contains half-a-dozen other phrases equally familiar, *e.g.*, "An honest man's the noblest work of God;" "Looks through nature up to nature's God;" "From grave to gay, from lively to severe;"—but breathes throughout sentiments which it would be credulous to believe that any man could express so vigorously without feeling profoundly. Mr Ruskin has quoted one couplet as giving "the most complete, the most concise, and the most lofty expression of moral temper existing in English words:"—

"Never elated, while one man's oppressed;
Never dejected, whilst another's blessed."

The passage in which they occur is worthy of this golden sentiment; and leads not unfitly to the conclusion and summary of the whole, that he who can recognise the beauty of virtue knows that—

> ". . . Where Faith, Law, Morals, all began,
> All end—in love of God and love of man."'

In 1732 Pope sustained a great blow in the death of his friend, the genial Gay; but a greater blow befel him in the following year in the loss of his aged mother.

'I thank God,' he wrote to Richardson, the painter, 'her death was as easy as her life was innocent, and as it cost her not a groan, or even a sigh, there is yet upon her countenance such an expression of tranquillity, nay, almost of pleasure, that it is even amiable to behold it. It would afford the finest image of a saint expired that ever painting drew: and it would be the greatest obligation which even that obliging art could ever bestow on a friend, if you would come and sketch it for me. I am sure, if there be no very prevalent obstacle, you will leave any common business to do this; and I hope to see you this evening as late as you will, or to-morrow morning as early, before this winter flower is faded. I will defer her interment till to-morrow night. I know you love me, or I would not have written this; I would not (at this time) have written at all. Adieu! May you die as happily!'

During this year (1733) were published the third Epistle of *The Essay on Man; Of the Knowledge and Characters of Men*, addressed to Lord Cobham, which now stands first of the *Moral Essays;* and *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace, imitated in a Dialogue between Alexander Pope, of Twickenham, in Com. Midd., Esq., on the one part, and his learned counsel* [Mr Fortescue] *on the other.* 'When I had a fever,' said Pope to Spence, who in some measure acted as his Boswell, 'one winter in town, that confined me to my room for five or six days, Lord Bolingbroke, who came to see me, happened to take up a Horace that lay on the table, and in turning it over, dipped on the first Satire of the second book, which begins *Sunt quibus in satira, etc.* He observed how well that would hit my case, if I were to

imitate it in English. After he was gone, I read it over, translated it in a morning or two, and sent it to the press in a week or a fortnight after. And this was the occasion of my imitating some other of the Satires and Epistles afterwards.'

A coarse couplet concerning Sappho in this Dialogue was understood by the public as an affront on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and led to the verbal hostilities between Pope and Lord Hervey, to which reference has already been made.

In 1734 appeared the *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* (now printed as *The Prologue to the Satires*), in which Pope, as a satirist, is seen in the perfection of his powers. It contains the famous character of Addison, composed, however, some years before, a finished piece of versification, in which there is just enough of truth to increase the pungency of the satire. To this year also belongs the fourth part of the *Essay on Man*. In 1735 was published, *Of the Characters of Women, an Epistle to a Lady* [Martha Blunt], which now forms the second of the *Moral Essays*. The strain of sensuality which marred the poet's temperament is unhappily conspicuous in *A Sermon against Adultery: being Some Advice from Horace to the Young Gentlemen about Town*, published anonymously in or about 1735. That it was Pope's own composition is beyond doubt; as also were the abominably indecent notes to which the name of Dr Bentley was impudently affixed. 'I have been told,' says the author of *A Letter to Mr Pope*, criticising and condemning this elaborate offence against decency, 'that the great critic himself, who did not read the Sermon till he heard something about his son and you, said after, "'Tis an impudent dog; but I talked against his Homer, and the portentous cub never forgives."'

An intense vanity, an over-mastering desire to be always the object of public attention, was one of Pope's greatest weaknesses, and no doubt the cause of some of his

gravest errors. It is unnecessary to dwell here upon the artifices to which he resorted to secure the publication of a collection of his *Letters*. We pity the poet's feeble egotism, and pass on. The world, after all, was the gainer; for Pope ranks with the best of our English letter-writers.[1] His letters, it is true, are inferior to those of Cowper in ease and spontaneity; it is evident that they were written for the public as well as for the correspondents to whom they are nominally addressed; but they are full of wit and vivacity, and introduce us to the best of company—to Gay and Swift, Arbuthnot and Bolingbroke.

'Delightful and generous banquet!' says Thackeray; 'with a little faith and a little fancy any one of us may enjoy it, and conjure up those great figures out of the past, and listen to their wit and wisdom. Mind that there is always a certain *cachet* about great men,—they may be as mean on many points as you or I, but they carry their great air—they speak of common life more largely and generously than common men do—they regard the world with a manlier countenance, and see its real features more fairly than the timid shufflers who only dare to look up at life through blinkers, or to have an opinion when there is a crowd to back it. He who reads these noble records of a past age, salutes and reverences the great spirits who adorn it;—you may go home and talk with St John; you may take a volume from your library and listen to Swift and Pope.'

I have spoken of Pope's vanity. Well, it would be easy to make a catalogue of his defects, though, for my part, I always think it a sorry task to reckon up the littlenesses of a great man. I know he *must* have them, or he would stand apart altogether from our common humanity. I know there are spots on the sun; but these do not prevent me from opening my heart with gratitude to its glorious light. Pope was vain and irritable—a necessary consequence, perhaps, of his physical constitution; he took offence easily, and he never forgave; but to his

[1] See *English Letter-Writers in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Howard Williams; and Elwin and Courthope's edition of Pope.

friends he was singularly loyal,—he was as a dutiful and affectionate son beyond all praise,—he was generous in money matters,—he had a man's courage—and, with all the occasional pettiness of his nature, he really aspired after noble things, and his sympathies were broad and true. 'I never in my life,' said Lord Bolingbroke, 'knew a man who had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or a more general friendship for mankind.' 'I think no man was ever so little fond of money,' said Mrs Rackett, his half-sister. 'I think my brother, when he was young,' she adds, 'read more books than any man in the world. . . . I don't think my brother knew what fear was.' When his attacks upon the dunces had raised up a host of enemies, not all of them very scrupulous, and he was threatened with personal chastisment, the feeble little cripple still took his daily walks abroad without any other protector than his faithful dog. 'I had rather die at once,' he exclaimed, 'than live in fear of those rascals.'

In 1737 were published four of Pope's *Imitations of Horace*, addressed respectively to Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Mansfield (then Mr Murray), George the Second, and Colonel Cotterell. During the next year he produced a couple of Dialogues, which now form the *Epilogue to the Satires*. *The Universal Prayer* belongs to 1738. About this time, says Warton, in his biography of the poet, he was honoured with the favour and friendship of Frederick, Prince of Wales, who was then in opposition to the Court. And Mr Glover told me, that being with Mr Pope at Twickenham, soon after he published *Leonidas*, the Prince, attended by Mr Lyttleton, one evening paid them a visit; the latter privately desired Pope and Glover that they would join with him in dissuading the Prince to ride a vicious horse he was fond of; and among other things urged on the subject, Pope said, with earnestness, to the Prince, 'I hope, sir, the people of England will not be made miserable by a *second* horse!' alluding to the

accident that befel King William. 'I think,' added Pope, whispering afterwards to Mr Glover, 'this speech was pretty well for me!'

In a letter to Swift, in May 1739, Pope gives his friend a pathetic account of his condition:—

> Having nothing to tell you of my poetry, I come to what is now my chief care, my health and amusements. The first is better, as to headaches; worse as to weakness and nerves. The changes of weather affect me much; otherwise I want not spirits, except when indigestions prevail. The mornings are my life. In the evenings I am not dead indeed, but sleep and am stupid enough. I love reading still better than conversation; but my eyes fail, and at the hours when most people indulge in company, I am tired, and find the labour of the past day sufficient to weigh me down: so I hide myself in bed, as a bird in his nest, much about the same time, and rise and chirp the earlier in the morning. I often vary the scene (indeed, at every friend's call) from London to Twickenham, or the contrary, to receive them, or be received by them.

An attempt having been made by M. Crousaz to show the anti-Scriptural tendency of the *Essay on Man*, Warburton (afterwards Bishop of Gloucester), already famous as the author of *The Divine Legation*, came forward as its defender, in a monthly literary journal, *The Republic of Letters*. This action led to an interview between the poet and his champion, of which the result was a sincere and enduring friendship. In 1741 appeared a collection of Pope's Letters and Prose Works, which included the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*. The poet and his new friend, towards the close of the year, resided at Bath, under the hospitable roof of Allen, the philanthropist, and Warburton supplied various notes to the fourth book of *The Dunciad*, written at his suggestion, and published early in 1742.

Pope's unreasonable attacks upon Colley Cibber provoked from the latter a spirited retaliation in *A Letter to Mr Pope Inquiring into the Motives that might induce him in his Satyrical Works to be so frequently fond of*

Mr Cibber's name. His account of the origin of the poet's hostility has never been refuted. He alleges that when enacting the part of Bayes in 'The Rehearsal,' he had made a good-humoured allusion to the absurd situations in Gay's and Pope's comedietta, 'Three Hours after Marriage'—an allusion which the audience endorsed by their applause.

> This, it seems, was so heinously taken by Mr Pope, that in the swelling of his heart, after the play was over, he came behind the scenes, with his lips pale and his voice trembling, to call me to account for the insult. And accordingly fell upon me with all the foul language that a wit out of his senses could be capable of:—How durst I have the impudence to treat any gentleman in that manner? etc., etc. Now let the reader judge by this concern who was the true mother of the child! When he was almost choked with the foam of his passion, I was enough recovered from my amazement to make him (as near as I can remember) this reply, viz.:—'Mr Pope, you are so particular a man, that I must be ashamed to return your language as I ought to do; but since you have attacked me in so monstrous a manner, this you may depend upon, that as long as the play continues to be acted, I will never fail to repeat the same words over and over again!' Now, as he accordingly found I kept my word for several days following, I am afraid he has since thought that his pen was a sharper weapon than his tongue to trust his revenge with. And however just cause this may be for his so doing, it is at least the only cause my conscience can charge me with.

Pope revenged himself for this severe attack by removing Theobald from the throne of Dulness he had so long occupied in *The Dunciad*, and placing Cibber upon it. In 1743 was published '*The Dunciad*, in Four Books, printed according to the complete copy found in the year 1742, with the Prolegomena of Scriblerus and Notes Variorum. To which are added several Notes, now first published, the Hypercritics of Aristarchus, and his Dissertation on the Hero of the Poem'—many of the notes and the Discourse of Aristarchus being written by Warburton. It was at once felt that the change of heroes was a mistake. The character and habits appropriately ascribed

to Theobald could not be made to fit the vivacious Cibber; for even the most prejudiced partisan was forced to admit that dulness was the last sin which could fitly be charged upon the author of 'The Careless Husband.' We may add that Cibber did not accept his involuntary preferment in silence; and it was perhaps in connection with his *Another Occasional Letter* (published in 1744) that the incident occurred which Johnson has recorded.

'I have heard Mr Richardson relate,' he says, 'that he attended his father, the painter, on a visit, when one of Cibber's pamphlets came into the hands of Pope, who said, "These things are my diversion." They sat by him while he perused it, and saw his features writhing with anguish; and young Richardson said to his father when they returned, that he hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope.'

The poet's health had been for some time declining. To his other physical ailments was added an asthmatical dropsy; and the end of that 'long disease,' as he pathetically called his life, was evidently drawing near. In the spring his disorder rapidly increased, and no hope of his recovery could reasonably be entertained. In his last hours he behaved with an admirable composure and calmness; he awaited the approach of death, not only with magnanimity, but with cheerfulness.

About three weeks before his dissolution, he sent out some of his ethical Epistles to his friends, remarking,—'Here am I, like Socrates, distributing my morality among my friends, just as I am dying.'

On the 10th of May he observed,—'One of the things that I have always most wondered at is, that there should be any such thing as human vanity. If I had any, I had enough to mortify it a' few days ago; for I lost my mind for a whole day.' A day or two later, he complained of that odd phenomenon (as he called it) of seeing everything in the room as through a curtain, and of false colours on objects.

It was on the 21st that Bolingbroke was moved to a

passion of tears by his friend's condition. On another occasion, the brilliant politician, while looking at him exclaimed several times—sobs interrupting his words,—'O great God! what is man?' Spence having informed him that Pope, when free from delirium, was always saying something kind, either of his present or his absent friends, and that it seemed as if his humanity had survived his understanding, he answered,—'It has so! it has so!' 'I have known him,' said Bolingbroke, 'these thirty years, and value myself more for that man's love than—' here his voice was choked with tears. But it must in honesty be added that Bolingbroke quickly forgot his ostentatious grief, and indulged in the luxury of a posthumous quarrel.

'The thing that I suffer most from,' said the poet, one day, 'is, that I find I cannot think.' He once exclaimed, 'What's that?' pointing into the air, with a fixed gaze; and then, turning to Spence with a smile of delight, he said, in a very soft voice,—''Twas a vision!' Not long before his death he observed:—'I am so certain of the soul's being immortal, that I seem to feel it within me, as it were by intuition.'

In a temporary fit of delirium he rose from bed, at four o'clock one morning, and went into his library, where a friend discovered him busily writing. It was afterwards found that the paper on which he had been engaged was an essay on *The Immortality of the Soul*, according to a theory of his own; in which he spoke of those material things which tend to strengthen and support the soul's immortality, and of those which weaken and destroy it.

He was asked whether he would not die as his father and mother had done, and whether a priest should not be sent for. 'I do not suppose that is essential,' he replied, 'but it will look right, and I heartily thank you for putting me in mind of it.' So great was the ardour of his devotion that he made a strenuous effort to throw himself out of bed, in order that he might receive the last sacra-

ment kneeling on the floor. On the following morning he said:—'There is nothing meritorious but virtue and friendship; and indeed friendship itself is only a part of virtue.'

Pope expired about eleven o'clock at night on the 30th of May 1744—passing away so peacefully that the exact moment of his departure was not observed by his attendants.

MATTHEW PRIOR.

Matthew Prior—or Matt Prior, as his contemporaries loved to call him—was born at Winburn, in Dorsetshire, on the 21st of July 1664. He lost his father while he was yet a child; but was kindly received into the household of his uncle, Samuel Prior—who kept 'The Rummer' Tavern, near Charing Cross,—and by him was placed at Westminster School, then under the care of Dr Busby 'of the rod.' There he acquired a scholarly knowledge of Latin, and learned, like most wits, to love his Horace. 'The Rummer' was much frequented by men of high degree, and among others by the accomplished and generous Earl of Dorset, who, coming upon the lad while he was reading the *Carmina*, and finding, on conversing with him, that he had plenty of talent, undertook the cost of his residence at St John's College, Cambridge. He was admitted in 1682, and taking his degree of M.A. in 1686, with much distinction, was soon afterwards elected to a fellowship. In 1688 he composed his *Ode on the Deity* (Exodus iii. xiv.), which was sent, according to the custom of the college, to the Earl of Essex, in acknowledgment of a benefaction it had received from his ancestors. It seems to have met with approval; and from Prior's poetical celebration of a picture at Burleigh House and the Countess's skill with the lute, it is probable that he was admitted to friendly intercourse with the family.

During his residence at college he made the acquaintance of Charles Montague, afterwards Earl of Essex, and

coming up to London, joined with him in writing the bright and lively satire of *The Country Mouse and the City Mouse*, in travesty of Dryden's *Hind and the Panther*. It is generally understood that the larger portion was the work of Prior; and when Lord Peterborough was asked whether Halifax had not written the Country Mouse along with our poet, he caustically replied,—'Yes, just as if I was in a chaise with Cheselden here, drawn by his fine horse, and should say, "Lord, how finely we draw this chaise."' The young author was immediately recognised as a promising Whig; and by a stroke of exceptionally good fortune obtained the appointment of Secretary of Embassy at the Hague. In this capacity he acquired the confidence of his employers, and was subsequently made Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the King. Diplomatic duties did not prevent him from cultivating both Love and Poetry; he wrote some smart copies of verses, and paid his addresses to Elizabeth Singer, afterwards the famous Mrs Rowe. In 1695 he made common cause with the great army of rhymesters and poetasters, and perpetrated an elegy on the death of Queen Mary, of which it is enough to say that it was by no means the worst. In the following year he was again at the Hague, being concerned in the negotiations which led to the Treaty of Ryswick. How he employed his leisure he has told us in the bright amusing verses entitled *The Secretary*, which have quite a Horatian charm about them:—

'While with a labour assiduous due pleasure I mix,
And in one day atone for the business of six;
In a little Dutch chaise on a Saturday night,
On my left hand my Horace, a Nymph on my right;
No *Mémoire* to compose and no Post-boy to move
That on Sunday may hinder the softness of love;
For her, neither visits, nor parties at tea,
Nor the long-winded cant of a dull refugee;
This night and the next shall be hers, shall be mine,
To good or ill fortune the third we resign:

Thus, scorning the world, and superior to fate,
I drive in my car in processional state,
So with Phia through Athens Pisistratus rode ;
Men thought her Minerva, and him a new god.
But why should I stories of Athens rehearse
Where people knew love, and were partial to verse;
Since none can with justice my pleasures oppose,
In Holland half-drowned in interest and prose ?
By Greece and past ages what need I be tried,
When the Hague and the present are both on my side ?
And is it enough for the joys of the day
To think what Anacreon or Sappho would say,
When good Vandergoes and his provident Vrow,
As they gaze on my triumph, do freely allow,
That, search all the province, you'll find no man *dar* is
So blessed as the Englishen Herr Secretar is.'

In 1697 Prior made another step in advance, being nominated Principal Secretary of State in Ireland. In the following year he went to Paris as secretary to the British Embassy, first under the Earl of Portland, and next, under the Earl of Jersey. His wit, accomplishments, and grace of manner made him a great favourite at the French Court, and that he had a pretty talent for repartee, an anecdote will prove to us. When the walls of Versailles, which Lebrun had embellished with the victories of Louis XIV., were shown to him, and he was asked whether the King of England's palace had any such decorations, he smartly replied,—'The monuments of my master's actions are to be seen everywhere but in his own house.'

In the middle of August 1699, having attended King William at Loo, in Holland, he was sent to England to take up the appointment of Under-Secretary of State ; but was soon ordered back to Paris to assist the ambassador with his knowledge of men and affairs. At Christmas he published his *Carmen Seculare*, in which he paid to his King a tribute of praise which was probably sincere in intention, notwithstanding its extravagance of diction. He had dabbled a good deal in verse during his diplomatic years

and it would be unpardonable not to notice his laughing good-humoured parody (in 1695) of Boileau's *Ode on the Capture of Namur* (by Louis XIV., in 1692), which he imitated verse for verse. Here is a specimen :—

Boileau.	*Prior.*
Est-ce Appollon et Neptune, Qui sur ces rocs sourcilleux Ont, compagnons de fortune, Bastè ces murs orguilleaux ? De leur enceinte fameuse La Sambre unie à la Meuse Défend le fatal abord ; Et par cent bouches horribles L'airain sur ces monts terribles Vomit le fer et la mort.	Neptune and Sol came from above, Shaped like Migrigny and Vauban : They armed these rocks ; then showed old Jove Of Marli wood, the wondrous plan. Such walls, these three wise gods agreed, By human force could ne'er be shaken : But you and I in Homer read Of gods as well as men, mistaken. Sambre and Meuse their waves may join ; But ne'er can William's force restrain : He'll pass them both who passed the Boyne: Remember this and arm the Seine.
Dix milles vaillans Alcides Les bordant de toutes parts, D'éclairs au loin homicides Font petiller, leur remparts : Et dans son sein infidèle Par toute la terre y recèle Un feu prest à s'élancer, Qui soudain perçant son goufre Ouvre un sépulchre de soufre A quiconque ose avancer.	Full fifteen thousand lusty fellows With fire and sword the fort maintain : Each was a Hercules, you tell us, Yet out they marched like common men. Cannons above and mines below Did death and tombs for foes contrive : Yet matters have been ordered so That most of us are still alive.
Namur, devant tes murailles Jadis la Grècs eust vingt ans Sans fruit vue les feméraillcs De ses plus fiers combattans. Quelle effroyable Puissance Aujourd'huy pourtant s'avanee, Prest à foudroyer tes monts ? Quel bruit, quel feu l'environne ? C'est Jupiter en personne ; Ou c'est le vainqueur de Mons.	If Namur be compared to Troy, Then Britain's boys excelled the Greeks : Their siege did ten long years employ ; We've done our bus'ness in ten weeks. What godhead does so fast advance With dreadful power those hills to gain ? 'Tis little Will, the scourge of France ; No Godhead, but the first of men. His mortal arm exerts the power To keep ev'n Mons's victor under : And that same Jupiter no more [der. Shall fight the world with impious thun-

The tide of prosperity for honest Mat rose higher and higher. In 1710 his university conferred on him the degree of M.A., and he was appointed on the Board of Trade, in succession to the philosophical Locke. In 1701 he was elected representative of East Grinstead, but no longer as a Whig. For some unexplained reason, he had seceded from his party, and he voted for impeaching the Ministers who had advised the confirmation of the Partition Treaty. In one of his poems he excuses this change of front by affirming that he never approved of the treaty, though compelled to carry it through in obedience to his sovereign.

> 'Matthew, who knew the whole intrigue,
> Nor much approved that mystic league.'

During the reign of Anne he found frequent employment for his facile pen in celebrating the glories which attended the arms of England. The victory of Blenheim was the immediate cause of *A Letter to Monsieur Boileau Déspreaux*, in which, amid much that is prosaic, we meet with occasional felicitous touches :—

> 'Why, faith! Despreaux, there's sense in what you say ;
> I told you where my difficulty lay :
> So vast, so numerous, were great Blenheim's spoils,
> They scorn the bounds of verse, and mock the Muse's toils.
> To make the rough recital aptly chime,
> Or bring the sum of Gallia's loss to rhyme,
> 'Tis mighty hard : what poet would essay
> To count the streamers of my Lord Mayor's day ?
> To number all the several dishes drest
> By honest Lamb, last coronation feast ?
> Or make arithmetic and epic meet,
> And Newton's thoughts in Dryden's style repeat ?'

He also composed an ode to the Queen, and verses in commemoration of Blenheim. There was much better stuff, however, in the volume of poems which he published in 1706 ; for it contained *The Nut-Brown Maid*, or, more correctly speaking, his expansion of the old ballad into a

lengthy poem in heroic couplets, under the title of *Henry and Emma.* Though it is quite true that he has preserved none of the simplicity of his original, I find myself unable to agree with a recent critic that the paraphrase is almost unendurable, for the versification is very sweet and fluent, and some of the lines seem to me exceedingly happy. As, for instance,—

> 'View me resolved, where'er thou lead'st to go,
> Friend to thy pain, and partner of thy woe.'
>
> 'And wingèd deaths in whistling arrows fly.'
>
> 'No longer shall the bodice, aptly laced,
> From thy full bosom to thy slender waist,
> That air and harmony of shape express,
> Fine by degrees, and beautifully less.'
>
> 'Our outward art is prompted from within,
> And from the sinner's mind proceeds the sin;
> By her own choice free virtue is approved;
> Nor by the force of outward objects moved.'

Prior contributed to the Tory *Examiner.* Garth's verses to Godolphin he covered with genial ridicule; and to his pen is ascribed the amusing fable of *The Widow and her Cat*, in which the ambition of Marlborough was keenly glanced at.

In 1711, when the Tories came into power, Prior was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of France, for the purpose of determining the basis on which a treaty of peace might be founded. In a few weeks he returned accompanied by Mesnager and the Abbé Gualtier; but, as the mission had been secretly contrived, the whole party were arrested at Canterbury. They were soon released, however, by the Queen's orders. They held their meetings at the house of Prior, who throughout the negotiations played a prominent and influential part, and is allowed to have acted with prudence and address. In

1712 he went to Paris as ambassador. 'He was to have been in the same commission,' says Johnson, 'with the Duke of Shrewsbury, but that that nobleman refused to be associated with one so meanly born. Prior therefore continued to act without a title till the Duke's return next year to England, and then he assumed the style and dignity of ambassador.' He remained at Paris, where in the highest circles he was a *persona grata*, for some months after the accession of George I.

When recalled, he became of necessity involved in the storm of obloquy that crushed down upon the leaders of the Tory party and their more conspicuous agents. His share in the peace negotiations marked him out for special attack. He was arrested (in March 1715) by order of the Privy Council, and after a short examination was impeached before the House of Commons, and kept in close confinement. He was not included in the Act of Grace passed in 1717; but the tempest having by this time exhausted itself, he was soon afterwards discharged from custody without any conditions. But, being deprived of all his pensions and emoluments, and reduced to live on the proceeds of his fellowship, the fallen diplomatist began to experience the pressure of poverty. With the carelessness of a wit and a poet he had neglected to make provision for the future, though it is evident from his correspondence that he had for some time anticipated the ill-fortune which befel him. His friends came to his help, as we learn from Erasmus Lewis's letter to Swift:—

'Our friend Prior,' he says, 'not having had the vicissitude of human things before his eyes, is likely to end his days in as forlorn a state as any other poet has done before him, if his friends do not take more care of him than he did of himself. Therefore, to prevent the evil which we see is coming on very fast, we have a project of printing his *Solomon* and other poetical works by subscription—one guinea to be paid in hand, and the other at the delivery of the book. He, Arbuthnot, Pope, and Gay are with me and remember you. It is our joint request that you will endeavour to procure some sub-

scriptions. You will give your receipts for the money you receive, and when you return it hither, you shall have others in lieu. There are no papers printed here, nor any advertisement to be published; for the whole matter is to be managed by friends in such a manner as shall be least shocking to the dignity of a plenipotentiary.'

This project realised four thousand pounds. The Earl of Oxford also granted him a pension, and gave him for his life the pleasant country residence of Down Hall, near Hatfield, in Essex.

Prior died of a slow fever on the 18th of September 1721, in the fifty-eighth year of his age. He was buried at his own desire in Westminster Abbey, and there are not a few interred there who less deserve the honour. His craving for posthumous fame must have been very strong, for he bequeathed a sum of five hundred pounds for the erection of a monument to his memory. The bust was executed by Coriveaux, and the long Latin inscription written by Dr Friend.

Though a good poet, Prior was not a good man. He loved wine and women; and the women he loved were coarse and disreputable creatures, not always endowed even with comeliness of person. Pope—by no means a rigid moralist—says of him,—'He was not a right good man. He used to bury himself for whole days and nights together with a poor mean creature, and often drank hard. He left most of his effects to the poor woman he kept company with—his Chloe [a certain Bessy Cox]. Everybody knows what a wretch she was; I think she had been a little ale-house keeper's wife;' and Spence adds, 'that after the death of her friend the poet, she became the wife of a country cobbler.' Dr Johnson calls his Chloes 'dirty drabs and despicable, who stole his plate and ran away.' And Richardson asserts that Prior could leave Pope and Swift, and retire to smoke his pipe with a common soldier and his wife in Long Acre.

Swift somewhere speaks of Prior as 'a thin, hollow-

looked man ;[1] or else, if one had drawn a fancy sketch of him, based on what one knows of his life and character, one would have given him a jolly rubicund face, with a plump rotundity of person—an easy, careless, indolent man, fond of a low kind of comfort, addicted to the pipe and the bottle—though capable, at need, of making a figure in the best society, and charming his hearers with his wise and witty talk. Of his wit at least there can be no doubt. All his contemporaries bear witness to it ; some of his repartees have been preserved, and are admirable in their sharpness and polish ; and his epigrams are, I take it, the best in the language. One of his answers to a coxcombical Frenchman may here be introduced. At the opera he was seated next to a person who kept accompanying with his voice the principal singer. Prior suddenly began to abuse the performer in the strongest terms, until the Frenchman expostulated with him for his injustice. 'Mais il chante si haut,' replied Prior, 'que je ne saurois vous entendre.' In a French *salon*, where every one sang an impromptu stanza with the burden, 'Banissons la mélancolie,' Prior's turn coming next to the performance of a young lady, he produced these apt lines :—

'Mais cette voix et ces beaux yeux
Font Cupidon très dangereux ;
Et je suis triste quand je crie
Banissons la mélancolie.'

We put together some of the best of his epigrams, and we doubt whether any other of our poets could show such a cluster of sparkling diamonds :—

'Yes, every poet is a fool ;
By demonstration Ned can show it,
Happy could Ned's inverted rule
Prove every fool to be a poet.'

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[1] This is confirmed by Bolingbroke, who speaks of his '*visage de bois*,' and of '*sa phisionomie, qui n'est pas des plus heureuses*.'

'On his death-bed poor Lubin lies ;
His spouse is in despair :
With frequent sobs and mutual cries
They both express their care.

A different cause, says Parson Sly,
The same effect may give :
Poor Lubin fears that he shall die ;
His wife, that he may live.'

'Nobles and heralds, by your leave,
Here lies what once was Matthew Prior,
The son of Adam and of Eve ;
Can Bourbon or Nassau claim higher?'[1]

The Remedy Worse than the Disease.

'I sent for Radcliff ; was so ill
That other doctors gave me over ;
He felt my pulse, prescribed his pill,
And I was likely to recover.

But when the wit began to wheeze,
And wine had warmed the politician,
Cured yesterday of my disease,
I died last night of my physician.'

'Lysander talks extremely well ;
On any subject let him dwell,
His tropes and figures will content ye :
He should possess to all degrees
The art of talk ; he practises
Full fourteen hours in four-and-twenty.'

As a writer of what are called, not altogether happily, *vers de société*, Prior takes high rank. He has all the grace and lightness of touch, all the ease and ingenuity of Horace, though he wants that deeper and more serious tone which sometimes tempers the gaiety of the Latin poet. He was the first in the field which Praed and Dobson and Locker have since so successfully cultivated ; a field in which we trace the influence not only of Latin but of

[1] An old joke ; but tersely put.

French predecessors. But besides those qualities which he had in common with other poets, he had a charm of his own which is rather to be felt than described. *The Dove* is not quotable; but how graceful it is in its harmonious flow and racy turns! And *The Garland;* where in English shall we find anything more prettily lyrical—anything more noticeable for aptness of expression and metrical sweetness? We give it *in extenso*:—

'The pride of every grove I chose;
The violet sweet and lily fair,
The dappled pink and blushing rose,
To deck my charming Cloe's hair.

At morn the nymph vouchsafed to place
Upon her brow the various wreath;
The flowers less blooming than her face,
The scent less fragrant than her breath.

The flowers she wore along the day:
And every nymph and shepherd said
That in her hair they looked more gay
Than glowing in their native bed.

Undrest at evening when she found
Their odours lost, their colours past;
She changed her look, and on the ground
Her garland and her eye she cast.

That eye dropt sense distinct and clear
As any Muse's tongue could speak,
When from its lid a pearly tear
Ran trickling down her beauteous cheek.

Dissembling what I knew too well,
"My love, my life," said I, "explain
This change of humour: pr'ythee tell:
That falling tear—what does it mean?"

She sighed, she smiled, and to the flowers
Pointing, the lovely moralist said:
"See, friend, in some few fleeting hours,
See yonder, what a change is made.

Ah me! the blooming pride of May
And that of beauty are but one:
At morn both flourish bright and gay,
Both fade at evening, pale and gone.

At dawn poor Stella danced and sang;
The amorous youth around her bowed;
At night her fatal knell was rung,
I saw, and kissed her in her shroud.

Such as she is who died to-day,
Such I, alas! may be to-morrow;
Go, Damon, bid thy Muse display
The justice of thy Cloe's sorrow."'

The following is even of higher polish; and the last verse seems to us absolutely perfect—so felicitous is it both in the image and the expression:—

TO A LADY: *she refusing to continue a dispute with me, and leaving me in the argument.*

'Spare, generous victor, spare the slave
Who did unequal war pursue;
That more than triumph he might have
In being overcome by you.

In the dispute whate'er I said,
My heart was by my tongue belied;
And in my looks you might have read
How much I argued on your side.

You, far from danger as from fear,
Might have sustained an open fight:
For seldom your opinions err;
Your eyes are always in the right.

Why, fair one, would you not rely
On Reason's force with Beauty's joined
Could I their prevalence deny,
I must at once be deaf and blind.

Alas! not hoping to subdue,
I only to the fight aspired:
To keep the beauteous foe in view
Was all the glory I desired.

But she, howe'er of victory sure,
Contemns the wreath too long delayed ;
And, armed with more immediate power,
Calls cruel silence to her aid.

Deeper to wound, she shuns the fight :
She drops her arms to gain the field ;
Secures her conquest by her flight ;
And triumphs, when she seems to yield.

So when the Parthian turned his steed,
And from the hostile camp withdrew,
With cruel skill the backward reed
He sent ; and as he fled he slew.'

Of his graceful anapæsts, which Moore seems to have studied with advantage, a brief example must be given. Observe how light and nimble is their movement, and yet how well the poet contrives to preserve his air of distinction and good breeding !

'Dear Chloe, how blubbered is that pretty face !
Thy cheek all on fire, and thy hair all uncurled :
Pr'ythee, quit this caprice, and (as old Falstaff says)
Let us e'en talk a little like folks of this world.

How canst thou presume thou hast leave to destroy
The beauties which Venus but lent to thy keeping?
Those looks were designed to inspire love and joy :
Mere ordinary eyes may serve people for weeping.

To be vexed at a trifle or two that I writ,
Your judgment at once and my passion you wrong :
You take that for fact, which will scarce be found wit :
Od's life, must one swear to the truth of a song ?

What I speak, my fair Chloe, and what I write, shows
The difference there is betwixt nature and art :
I court others in verse ; but I love thee in prose :
And they have my whimsies ; but thou hast my heart.

The god of us versemen (you know, child), the sun,
How after his journeys he sets up his rest ;
If at morning o'er earth 'tis his fancy to run ;
At night he reclines on his Thetis's breast.

So when I am wearied with wandering all day,
To thee, my delight, in the evening I come:
No matter what beauties I saw in my way:
They were but my visits, but thou art my home.

Then finish, dear Chloe, this pastoral war,
And let us like Horace and Lydia agree:
For thou art a girl as much brighter than her,
As he was a poet sublimer than me.'

There are both humour and good sense in the following:—

SIMILE.

'Dear Thomas, did'st thou never pop
Thy head into a tin-man's shop?
There, Thomas, didst thou never see
('Tis but by way of simile!)
A squirrel spend his little rage,
In jumping round a rolling cage?
The cage, as either side turned up,
Striking a ring of bells a-top?
Moved in the orb, pleased with the chimes,
The foolish creature thinks he climbs:
But here or there, turn wood or wire,
He never gets two inches higher.
So fares it with those merry blades,
That frisk it under Pindus' shades.
In noble songs and lofty odes
They tread on stars, and talk with gods;
Still dancing in an airy round,
Still pleased with their own verses' sound;
Brought back, how fast so'er they go,
Always aspiring, always low.'

'Noble songs and lofty odes' are not at all in Prior's way. He tried something of the kind in his long poem of *Solomon on the Vanity of the World*, but succeeded only in being drearily didactic. It would have supplied Solomon with as pretty a commentary on his '*Vanitas vanitatum*' as could be desired. Yet it was a great favourite with its author, who waxed indignant with Pope because

he could not see in it all that he himself did. 'Indeed,' he exclaims,—

> 'Indeed, poor *Solomon* in rhyme
> Was much too grave to be sublime.'

He establishes his sincerity as a patriot if he does not wholly confirm his excellence as a poet, in what is the most animated passage in the poem—an encomium upon Great Britain :—

> 'An isle, the seat
> Of power and plenty ; her imperial throne
> For justice and for mercy sought and known ;
> Virtues sublime, great attributes of Heaven,
> From thence to this distinguished nation given :
> Yet further west the western isle extends
> Her happy fame ; her armèd fleet she sends
> To climates folded yet from human eye :
> And lands which we imagine wave and sky.
> From pole to pole she hears her acts resound,
> And rules an empire by no ocean bound ;
> Knows her ships anchored and her sails unfurled,
> In other Indies and a second world.'

As a tale-teller he displays an untiring vivacity, and the flow of his verse is apparently spontaneous. His wit never fails him, but his sense of decency does ; and *Hans Carvel* and *Paulo Purganti* are not exactly the viands we should care to put before *virginibus puerisque.* His most ambitious poem, and perhaps his most successful, is *Alma;* though it now belongs to the category of books talked about, but not read. It was written in 1715 and 1716, while he was kept in custody with a charge of high treason hanging over him. Pope pronounced it his friend's masterpiece ; but Prior, with the usual misjudgment of authors, thought it inferior to his *Solomon.* Its subject is the fancies and speculations of philosophers as to the relations of the soul and the body ; and this fertile theme is treated, with infinite ingenuity and versatility, in lan-

guage always clear and generally vigorous, which moves along airily enough in its octosyllabic measure. The form is that of a dialogue between the author (Matthew) and his friend Shelto (Richard), and it divides into three cantos. No logical or sequential train of thought is observed ; the poet wanders from idea to idea and fancy to fancy, usually keeping a steady flight, though sometimes the wing droops ; but never troubling himself as to the waywardness of his course. It is evident enough that he has studied *Hudibras*. He does not imitate, however; and Butler could no more have written *Alma* than Prior could have written *Hudibras*, though in the following couplets we seem to catch the Hudibrastic echo :—

> 'And though the skull may wear the laurel,
> The soldier's arm sustains the quarrel.'
>
> 'The commentators on old Aristotle ('tis urged), in judgment vary.'
>
> 'Horace's phrase is, *torret jecur;*
> And happy was that curious speaker.'
>
> 'All your philosophers agree,
> And prove it plain, that one may be
> A heretic, or true believer,
> On this or t'other side a river.'
>
> 'Here, Richard, how could I explain
> The various labyrinths of the brain !
> Surprise my readers whilst I tell 'em
> Of cerebrum and cerebellum !
> How could I play the commentator
> On dura and on pia mater ! '

On the whole, it may be said that if there be poets of the Augustan age whom we read with more admiration than Prior, there are none whom we read with greater pleasure.

JOHN GAY.

In Spence's gossipy *Anecdotes*, Pope is represented as sketching the life of the poet Gay in a delightfully terse and epigrammatic fashion :—

'Gay,' he says, 'was quite a natural man,—wholly without art or design, and spoke just what he thought and as he thought it. He dangled for twenty years about a court, and at last was offered to be made usher to the young princesses. Secretary Craggs made Gay a present of stock in the South Sea bubble; and he was once worth over twenty thousand pounds, but lost it all again. He got about four hundred pounds by the first "Beggar's Opera," and eleven hundred by the second. He was negligent and a bad manager. Latterly, the Duke of Queensberry took his money into his keeping, and let him only have what was necessary out of it, and, as he lived with him, he could not have occasion for much. He died worth upwards of three thousand pounds.'

In his negligence and mismanagement pecuniarily, John Gay resembled his contemporary and friend, Sir Richard Steele. He resembled him also in his good humour and genial nature. He was one of the most loveable members of that company of wits and men of letters who made the early years of the eighteenth century ring with kindly laughter. Everybody liked him, and he liked everybody. It is such men who make 'the gaiety of nations.' 'Mr Gay,' says the sardonic Swift, warming into hearty praise, 'is, in all regards, as honest and sincere a man as ever I knew.' In the portraits of the literary worthies of the Augustan age, Gay's face, as Thackeray remarks, is, perhaps, the pleasantest of all. 'It appears adorned with neither periwig nor nightcap (the full dress and *negligée* of learning, without which the painters of those days scarcely ever portrayed wits), and he laughs at you over his shoulder with an honest boyish glee—an artless secret humour.' You know what Pope says of him in the *Epitaph* :—

'Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit a man; simplicity, a child;
With native humour temp'ring virtuous rage,
Formed to delight at once and lash the age;
Above temptation in a low estate,
And uncorrupted e'en among the great:
A safe companion and an easy friend,
Unblamed through life, lamented in thy end.
These are thy honours; not that here thy bust
Is mixed with heroes, or with kings thy dust;
But that the worthy and the good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms, "*Here* lies Gay!"'

Gay was born in the same year as Pope—the year of 'the glorious Revolution,' 1688. He was the second son of John Gay, Esq. of Frithelstock, near Great Torrington, in Devonshire. He came, therefore, of an ancient family, but its circumstances were greatly decayed, and Gay, after receiving a scanty education in the town of Barnstaple, was sent to London and apprenticed to a silk-mercer. From this uncongenial employment he contrived to obtain his release; and, in 1708, he published a poem in blank verse, entitled *Wine*, which is neither better nor worse than the poetical efforts of most young men of twenty. There was real promise, however, in his next venture, *Rural Sports* (1713), a descriptive poem, with a dedication to Pope, which introduced him into the literary society of London, and made Pope his friend. It helped also to procure him the appointment of secretary to the Duchess of Monmouth. In the same year he produced a comedy, 'The Wife of Bath,' at Drury Lane, which met with little success and deserved little. The title, and the scene, and the principal character are borrowed from Chaucer, but the plot, such as it is, is Gay's own.

There were some passages of admirable description in *Rural Sports*, and these induced Pope to suggest to his friend that he should issue a set of Pastorals in opposition to, or caricature of, the affected eclogues of Ambrose Philips.

The result was Gay's series of six Pastorals under the general title of *The Shepherd's Week*, published in 1714, with a proem in prose to the reader, and a rhyming prologue addressed to Lord Bolingbroke. Gay, in writing these Pastorals, frequently forgot his satiric purpose, and being, as Pope said, 'a natural man,' strayed away into simple homely pictures of the rural life he had known in his childhood. 'Here,' he says to the reader, 'thou wilt not find my Shepherdesses idly piping upon oaten Reeds, but milking the Kine, tying up the Sheaves, or, if the Hogs are astray, driving them to their Styes. My Shepherd gathered none other Nosegays, but what are the growth of our own Fields; he sleepeth not under Myrtle shades, but under a Hedge; nor doth he vigilantly defend his Flocks from Wolves, because there are none.' And he carries out his plan with a charming simplicity of manner and freshness of expression; though the effect is somewhat marred by the burlesque names he gives to his *dramatis personæ*. Bumkinet and Grubbinol, and Holnelia and Bowzybœus. Apart from this, *The Shepherd's Week* is perfect of its kind; and while valuable as a faithful picture of English country life at the opening of the eighteenth century, is at all times pleasant reading. It is the work of a close but kindly observer, who wears a smile on his lips and has a laugh in his voice, even when a word or two of gentle ridicule drops from his lips. How excellent is the reproachful complaint of the neglected country lass :—

'Oh, Colin! must thou leave thy Sweetheart true?
What I have done for thee will Cic'ly do? . . .
In misling days when I my thresher heard,
With nappy beer I to the barn repaired;
Lost in the music of the whirling flail
To gaze on thee I left the smoking pail:
In harvest when the sun was mounted high,
My leathern bottle did thy draught supply;
Whene'er you moved I followed with the rake,
And have full oft been sunburnt for thy sake;

When in the welkin gathering showers were seen,
I lagged the last with Colin on the green ;
And when at eve returning with thy car,
Awaiting heard the jingling bells from far ;
Straight on the fire the sooty pot I placed,
To warm thy broth I burnt my hands for haste.
When hungry thou stood'st staring, like an oaf,
I sliced the luncheon from the barley loaf ;
With crumbled bread I thickened well thy mess,
Ah, love me more, or love thy pottage less !'

In minuteness of drawing Gay had a touch as firm and exact as that of the old Dutch painters. With what nice particularity he records the themes of which his rural ballad-monger descants :—

'Now he goes on, and sings of fairs and shows,
For still new fairs before his eyes arose.
How pedlars' stalls with glittering toys are laid,
The various fairings of the country maid.
Long silken laces hang upon the twine,
And rows of pins and amber bracelets shine ;
How the tight lass knives, combs, and scizzors spies,
And looks on thimbles with desiring eyes.
Of lotteries meet with tuneful note he told,
Where silver spoons are won, and rings of gold.
The lads and lasses trudge the street along,
And all the fair is crowded in his song.
The mountebank now treads the stage, and sells
His pills, his balsams, and his ague-spells ;
Now o'er and o'er the nimble tumbler springs,
And on the rope the venturous maiden swings ;
Jack Pudding, in his party-coloured jacket,
Tosses the glove, and jokes at every packet.
Of raree-shows he sang, and Punch's feats,
Of pockets picked in crowds, and various cheats.'

Though no man was ever less fitted for public employment than Gay, with his constitutional indolence, his love of ease and good living, his merry laugh and guileless nature, by no man was it ever more eagerly desired, perhaps because the artless epicurean appreciated the value of a fixed income. At one time the much-coveted happi-

ness seemed within his grasp; and he writes to Pope (1714) exultantly:—'Since you went out of the town, my Lord Clarendon was appointed Envoy-Extraordinary to Hanover, in the room of Lord Paget; and by making use of those friends which I entirely owe to you, he has accepted me for his secretary.' Giving up his appointment in the Duchess of Monmouth's household, he accompanied Lord Clarendon on his embassy; but the death of Queen Anne recalled that nobleman to England, and Gay lost his post after a brief tenure of two months. The Whigs came into office under George I., and set a black mark against the name of the poet who had dedicated *The Shepherd's Week* to Bolingbroke. Pope, writing to him on September 23d, and welcoming him to his native soil, advised him, as a sure means of gaining the favour of the Court, to 'write something on the King or Prince or Princess;' and Gay acted upon this advice so far as to publish *An Epistle to a Lady, occasioned by the Arrival of her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.* This loyal effusion secured him admission to the Court, and the Prince and Princess went to see his play of 'The What d'ye Call It?' but this was all.

The tragi-comic pastoral farce, entitled 'The What d'ye Call It?' was first acted at Drury Lane in February 1715, and fortunately hit the taste of the town. It belongs to the same category of pieces as 'The Rehearsal,' and contains much happy and good-natured burlesque of the tragedies then in general acceptance, especially of Otway's 'Venice Preserved,' the principal characters of which—Iaffier, Pierre, and Belvidera—are amusingly ridiculed in the parts of Filbert, Peascod, and Kitty Carrot. The humour is spontaneous and lively; there is much ingenuity in the situations; and the language sometimes breathes the spirit of true poetry. Pope gives the following account of its reception:—

'The farce of 'The What d'ye Call It' has occasioned many

different speculations in the town. Some looked upon it as a mere jest upon the tragic parts; others, as a satire upon the late war. Mr Cromwell, hearing none of the words and seeing the action to be tragical, was much astonished to see the audience laugh, and says the Prince and Princess (afterwards George II. and Queen Caroline, then just arrived in England) must doubtless be under no less amazement on the same account. Several Templars, and others of the more vociferous kind of critics, went with a resolution to hiss, and confessed they were forced to laugh so much that they forgot the design they came out with. The Court, in general, has in a very particular manner come into the jest; and the three first nights (notwithstanding two of them were court-nights) were distinguished by very full audiences of the first quality. The common people of the pit and gallery received it at first with great gravity and sedateness, some few with tears; but after the third day they also took the hint, and have ever since been very loud in their claps. There are still some sober men who cannot be of the general opinion; but the laughers are so much the majority, that one or two critics seem determined to undeceive the town at their proper cost by writing grave dissertations against it (an allusion, perhaps, to the abusive pamphlet, by Griffin and Theobald, called *The Key to the What d'ye Call It*), to encourage them in which laudable design, it is resolved a preface shall be prefixed to the farce, in vindication of the nature and dignity of this new way of writing.'

In this drama Gay introduced his beautiful ballad, 'Twas when the Seas were roaring,' in which Cowper—apparently without the slightest authority—says he was assisted by Swift, Gay, and Arbuthnot. The reader will fail to trace any indication of composite authorship:—

'Twas when the seas were roaring
With hollow blasts of wind;
A damsel lay deploring,
All on a rock reclined.
Wide o'er the rolling billows
She cast a wistful look;
Her head was crowned with willows
That tremble o'er the brook.

"Twelve months are gone and over,
And nine long tedious days;
Why didst thou, venturous lover,
Why didst thou trust the seas?

Cease, cease, thou cruel ocean,
And let my lover rest :
Ah ! what's thy troubled motion
To that within my breast ?

The merchant, robbed of pleasure,
Sees tempests in despair ;
But what's the loss of treasure
To losing of my dear ?
Should you some coast be laid on,
Where gold and diamonds grow,
You'd find a richer maiden,
But none that loves you so.

How can they say that nature
Has nothing made in vain ;
Why, then, beneath the water,
Should hideous rocks remain ?
No eyes the rocks discover
That lurk beneath the deep,
To wreck the wandering lover,
And leave the maid to weep."

All melancholy lying,
Thus wailed she for her dear ;
Repaid each blast with sighing,
Each billow with a tear.
When o'er the white wave stooping
His floating corpse she spied,
Then, like a lily drooping,
She bowed her head, and died.'

In 1706, the public eagerly welcomed Gay's *Trivia ; or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, in which he had had some assistance from Swift :—the first English poem which dealt with the humours of social life in a great city. Here, again, his faculty for minute painting of details came into play, with the result that we have before us a wonderfully comprehensive picture of eighteenth-century London in its everyday aspects ; so elaborate in its accuracy, that the poem is really an antiquarian record. In *The Fan*, a fanciful, serio-mythological poem, in three books, published in the same year, he was less successful.

Nor did he improve his literary position by his share in the three-act comedy of *Three Hours after Marriage*, acted at Drury Lane in 1717, and very decidedly damned. For this unfortunate affair Pope and Arbuthnot were largely responsible; but afraid lest they might be injured by their connection with it, Gay generously took the burden upon himself. It fully deserved the condemnation it received, for the plot is a tissue of improbabilities, and the dialogue is offensively seasoned with indecency and personal satire. Foote himself never dealt more audaciously with living characters: Dr Woodward, the geologist, being ridiculed in the name of Fossil, Dennis as Sir Tremendous, Lady Winchelsea as Phœbe Clinket. The incidents of the mummy and the crocodile, which Gay himself introduced, are ridiculous without being diverting.[1]

An allusion to this tripartite comedy in Colley Cibber's *Rehearsal* led to Pope's quarrel with that amusing personage, and his elevation to the throne of Dulness in *The Dunciad.*

For three years Gay remained silent and depressed. In 1720, he collected his poems and published them by subscription, realising a sum of one thousand pounds. Mr Secretary Craggs also presented him with twenty thousand pounds worth of South Sea stock, but he neglected to sell out, and when the great bubble burst, lost all his fortune. His friends, however—and Gay was for-

[1] Gay wrote to Pope as follows:—'Too, late I see, and confess myself mistaken in relation to the comedy; yet I do not think, had I followed your advice, and only introduced the mummy, that the absence of the crocodile had saved it. I can't help laughing myself (though the vulgar do not consider it was designed to look ridiculous) to think how the poor monster and mummy were dashed at their reception; and when the cry was loudest, I thought that if the thing had been written by another, I should have deemed the town in some measure mistaken; and as to your apprehension that this may do us future injury, do not think of it: the Doctor has a more valuable name than can be hurt by anything of this nature, and yours is doubly safe. I will, if any shame there be, take it all to myself; and, indeed, I ought, the motion being first mine, and never heartily approved by you.'

tunate in his friends, who were sincere as well as numerous, and gave him assistance as well as advice—rallied round him, so that he could still indulge his love of fine clothes and good living. In 1722, he found courage to make another dramatic venture ; and his tragedy of 'The Captives' was acted for nine nights at Drury Lane with some applause. An amusing anecdote is told respecting it. Its author, it seems, was in such favour with Queen Caroline, then Princess of Wales, that she desired him to read his play to her at Leicester House.

> He waited some time in a presence-chamber with his play in his hand ; but being a very modest man, and unequal to the trial he was going to, when the door of the drawing-room, where the princess sat with her ladies, was opened for his entrance, he was so much confused and concerned about making his proper obeisance, that he did not see a low footstool that happened to be near him, and, stumbling over it, he fell against a large screen, which he overset, and threw the ladies into no small disorder.

Of Gay's *Fables*, published in 1726, I need say but little. They are not read by the present generation ; though one of them, *The Hare and Many Friends*, is still remembered on account of its universal application. Their versification is smooth, but tame ; they exhibit much good sense, good humour, and knowledge of humanity ; but they never approach the artistic excellence of La Fontaine. They were written for the especial edification of the Duke of Cumberland ; history does not tell us that he profited by their teaching.

The crowning success of Gay's career was reserved for the year 1726, when he was still in the prime of manhood. Swift, who had come to England on a visit to Pope at Twickenham, threw out the idea of a Newgate pastoral, in caricature of the Italian opera, in which the characters should be thieves and highwaymen. Hence arose the immortal 'Beggar's Opera'—one of those felicitous creations which can never be repeated or even successfully imitated.

An interesting account of its origin and production is given by Pope:—

'Dr Swift,' he says, 'had been observing once to Mr Gay, what an odd pretty sort of thing a Newgate Pastoral might make. Gay was inclined to try at such a thing for some time, but afterwards thought it would be better to write a comedy on the same plan. This was what gave rise to the "Beggar's Opera." He began on it, and when he first mentioned it to Swift, the Doctor did not much like the project. As he carried it on he showed what he wrote to both of us; and we now and then gave a correction, a word or two of advice; but it was wholly of his own writing. When it was done, neither of us thought it would succeed. We showed it to Congreve, who, after reading it over, said, "It would either take greatly or be damned confoundedly." We were all at the first night of it, in great uncertainty of the event, till we were very much encouraged by overhearing the Duke of Argyle, who sat in the next box to us, say, "It will do—it must do! I see it in the eyes of them!" This was a good while before the first act was over, and so gave us ease soon; for the Duke (besides his own good taste) has a more particular knack than any one now living in discovering the taste of the public. He was quite right in this as usual; the good nature of the audience appeared stronger and stronger every act, and ended in a clamour of applause.'

In the first season of its performance it had the then unexampled run of sixty-three nights.

Sir Robert Walpole was not infrequently the object of Gay's keen but good-humoured wit. This did not prevent him, however, from attending the first performance of his new play. An unanimous encore attended the well-known air of Lockit, and all eyes were turned towards the great Minister when it was repeated:—

'When you censure the age,
Be cautious and sage,
Lest the courtiers offended should be:
If you mention *vice* or *bribe*,
'Tis so pat to all the tribe,
That each cries, "*That was levelled at me!*"'

Sir Robert, observing (we are told) the pointed manner in which the hearers applied to him the last line,

parried the thrust by encoring it with his single voice; and thus not only warded off the poet's stroke, but gained 'a general huzza from the audience.'

By the success of this opera Gay cleared a sum of six hundred and ninety-three pounds thirteen shillings and sixpence. That it proved so successful is not to be wondered at; it was entirely fresh and novel in conception and execution; it was so rich in its humour, so happy in its parody, so vivacious in its dialogue, and so freely interspersed with felicitous songs, which Gay, with his musical skill, well knew how to make *singable*, that it could not fail to charm. And though much of its wit is now *rococo*, and many of its allusions have been rendered obsolete by the passage of time, the general truth of its satire makes it always applicable.

Here are a few specimens of its epigrammatic dialogue, with Gay's neat, terse way of putting things:—

Why must Polly's marriage, contrary to all observation, make her the less followed by other men? All men are thieves in love, and like a woman the better for being another's property.

If you must be married, could you introduce nobody into our own family but a highwayman? Why, thou foolish jade, thou wilt be as ill-used and as much neglected as if thou hadst married a lord.

Polly. I did not marry him (as 'tis the fashion) coolly and deliberately for honour or money—but I love him.

Mrs Peach. Love him! worse and worse! I thought the girl had been better bred.

Polly. Then all my sorrows are at an end.

Mrs Peach. A mighty likely speech, in truth, for a wench who is just married!

Money is the true fuller's earth for reputations; there is not a spot or a stain but what it can take out.

The comfortable estate of widowhood is the only hope that keeps up a wife's spirit.

To cheat a man is nothing; but the woman must have fine parts indeed who cheats a woman.

Like great statesmen, we encourage those who betray their friends.

Peachum [*to Lockit*]. Brother! brother! we are both in the wrong.

If you would not be looked upon as a fool, you should never do anything but upon the footing of interest: those that act otherwise are their own bubbles.

See the partiality of mankind! One man may steal a horse better than another look over a hedge.

'Some laws were made for every degree,
To curb vice in others as well as in me,
I wonder we ha'n't better company
Upon Tyburn tree!

But gold from law can take all the sting,
And if rich men like us are to swing,
'Twould thin the land such numbers to string
Upon Tyburn tree!'

As for the morality of the piece, we must remember that Gay did not expect to be taken *au serieux*. Its intention, he explains, in the last scene, through the mouth of one of his characters:—'Through the whole piece,' he says, 'you may observe such a similitude of manners in high and low life, that it is difficult to determine whether, in the fashionable views, the fine gentlemen imitate the gentlemen of the road, or the gentlemen of the road the fine gentlemen.' In other words, it is a social satire.

The happy fortune of 'The Beggar's Opera' encouraged Gay to attempt a sequel, in which, according to a hint thrown out in the last scene of the first part, Polly, Captain Macheath, and some other of the characters, are transported to America. It is as great a failure as sequels generally are; dull and insipid, and raised above mediocrity only by its songs, which, like all of Gay's, have the true lyrical lilt. But inferior as it is in a literary sense, it yielded its author an ample pecuniary return, owing to the public interest excited by the Lord Chamberlain's refusal to allow it to be acted. The Duke of Grafton, who then held the office, was deaf to every solicitation:—

The Whigs in power, headed by Walpole and his friends, had the address to represent Gay to George II. as disaffected to his Government. On the other hand, all the Tories, and discontented and displaced Whigs, contradicted this assertion. They insisted that Walpole was leading the King and Hanover family to its ruin, by introducing a system of corruption, instead of relying on the affection of his subjects ; and that it was the political tendency of "The Beggar's Opera," as exposing that system, not the pretended immoral tendency of the piece, that raised the Court clamour against him. The Queen was for some time divided ; and Grafton, who was a good-natured man of moderate talents, was just on the point of giving way to the entreaties of his friends, in favour of Gay, when Walpole, getting a hint of it, went privately to the Queen, who went to the King directly, and prevailed on him to interfere. The King sent directly to the Chamberlain ; so that when Gay came to know Grafton's final result, he met with a positive refusal, without any specific reason assigned. He offered to read the piece to His Grace, in order that His Grace might point out the objectionable passages, on purpose to alter or totally expunge them ; but the Chamberlain's secret instructions being positive and direct, Gay was compelled, after a deal of time and struggle, to give way to the Minister's resentment.

But if Gay could not get his play acted, there was nothing to prevent him from publishing it, and the Chamberlain's prohibition having whetted the public curiosity, the demand for it of course was very considerable. Gay realised by the sale between eleven hundred and twelve hundred pounds. The Duchess of Marlborough, as her subscription for a single copy, sent him one hundred pounds. Thus, by the good luck which attended these later efforts, he realised a fortune of three thousand pounds ; and desiring to keep it intact willingly accepted the hospitality offered by his kind friends, the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry (Prior's 'Kitty, beautiful and young'), with whom he spent the remainder of his short life, petted and caressed. He wrote some additional fables, and carried on an intermittent correspondence with Pope and Swift. From one of his letters we quote the well-known episode of the two lovers killed in a thunderstorm, which Pope stole and transmitted as his own to

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu[1]—which Thomson afterwards appropriated and put into his *Seasons*. It is related with a charming naturalness of manner:—

I have just passed part of this summer at an old romantic seat of my Lord Harcourt's, which he lent me. It overlooks a common field, where, under the shade of a haycock, sat two lovers—as constant as ever were found in romance—beneath a spreading beech. The name of the one (let it sound as it will) was John Hewit, of the other, Sarah Drew. John was a well-set man, about five-and-twenty; Sarah a brown woman of eighteen. John had for several months borne the labour of the day in the same field with Sarah: when she milked, it was his morning and evening charge to bring the cows to her pail. Their love was the talk, but not the scandal, of the whole neighbourhood, for all they aimed at was the blameless possession of each other in marriage. It was but this very morning that he had obtained her parents' consent, and it was but till the next week that they were to wait to be happy. Perhaps this very day, in the intervals of their work, they were talking of their wedding clothes; and John was now matching several kinds of poppies and field-flowers to her complexion to make her a present of knots for the day. While they were thus employed (it was on the last of July) a terrible storm of thunder and lightning arose, that drove the labourers to what shelter the trees or hedges afforded. Sarah, frightened and out of breath, sank on a haycock; and John (who never separated from her) sat by her side, having raked two or three heaps together, to secure her. Immediately there was heard so loud a crack, as if heaven had burst asunder. The labourers, all solicitous for each other's safety, called to one another; those that were nearest our lovers, hearing no answer, stepped to the place where they lay: they first saw a little smoke, and after, this faithful pair—John, with one arm about his Sarah's neck, and the other held over her face, as if to secure her from the lightning. They were struck dead, and already grown stiff and cold in this tender posture. There was no mark or discolouring on their bodies—only that Sarah's eyebrow was a little singed, and a small spot between her breasts. They were buried the next day in one grave.

Good living and indolence brought Gay's life to a premature close, after a three days' illness, on the 4th of

[1] See his letter to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, dated Sept. 1, 1717, and *ante*, p. 252.

December 1732. He was only forty-six years old. On the following day Pope communicated the sad intelligence to Swift:—'One of the nearest and longest ties I ever had is broken all on a sudden by the unexpected death of poor Mr Gay. An inflammatory fever hurried him out of this life in three days. He asked of you a few hours before, when in acute torment by the inflammation in his bowels and breast.' Swift, with unusual emotion, broke away from his customary reserve, and endorsed his friend's letter:—'On my dear friend, Mr Gay's death; received December 13th, but not read till the 20th, by an impulse foreboding some misfortune.'

I fear that, except by the student of our older poetry, Gay's works are but little read now. The author of 'Black-Eyed Susan' is, however, too sweet and too true a singer to be wholly forgotten.

CHAPTER V.

THE LESSER POETS.

Character of English Poetry in the Reign of Anne—Its Chief Metrical Form—The Countess of Winchelsea—Thomas Tickell—Elegy on Addison—Thomas Parnell—An Unhappy Life—The Hermit—Night Piece on Death—The Dispensary and Sir Samuel Garth—Sir Richard Blackmore—His Epics—Ambrose Philips—His Pastoral Poems—Poems on Children—John Philips—William Walsh—Friendship with Pope—Elijah Fenton—William Broome—Aaron Hill[1]—Zara—Lawrence Eusden—Leonard Welsted—Thomas Cook—Charles Gildon—John Dennis—His Critical Works—His Plays[2]—Lewis Theobald—James Ralph—William Somerville—The Chase—Matthew Green—The Spleen—Dr Young—John Byrom.

WHEN Queen Anne ascended the throne some of the poets of the Restoration were still alive. The Earl of Dorset was a man of sixty-five, but lived on until the beginning of 1706. Congreve was thirty-two, Garth forty-two; Matthew Prior, who had already attained a considerable repute, was thirty-eight. Dryden, however, had been dead two years, and a marked change was already visible in the strain of English poetry. It was not only more decent, but more refined and academic; and it had begun to deal with the science of manners and the philosophy of morals. There was less about love and lovers, gay dames and gayer gallants; more about the relations of man to man, more about the social aspects of the time. The causes of this change were due partly, no doubt, to the improved tone of English society, which had been sobered by contemplation of the grave issues involved in the Revolution of 1688; partly to a revived study of classical models; and partly to the influence of the French

[1] See Vol. I., the chapter on the Dramatists.

[2] Accidentally omitted from the chapter on the Dramatists in Vol. I.

school. This last cause cannot, I think, be wholly ignored or rejected ; but I am doubtful whether it operated so powerfully as some critics have contended. Nor must the pretension—put forward very strongly by M. Taine—that all the productions of this period have a 'classical impress,' be conceded. The truth is, that the new departure in English poetry (and to some extent a similar departure took place in English prose) was but the natural result of the various processes at work in the development of our literature. English literature has always reflected, more or less, our English history : the prose and poetry of Elizabethan writers breathed the freedom and independence of Elizabethan sea adventure. The reaction in Charles II.'s reign against the high impulses and rigid practices of Puritanism was felt in the bright but dissolute lyrics of Sedley and Rochester. The gravity and settled order and more consistent morality of the age of Anne were reproduced in the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*. M. Taine sees a dreadful uniformity pervading the productions of our poets and prose writers of this time. 'We might imagine ourselves,' he says, 'to be before a family of plants ; if the size, colour, accessories, names differ, the fundamental type does not vary ; the stamens are of the same number, similarly inserted around similar pistils, above leaves arranged on the same plan ; a man who knows one knows all ; there is a common organism and structure which involves the uniformity of the rest.' This is ingenious and fanciful ; but I venture to say that it is not true. There are wide differences between Prior and Pope, between Gay and Addison ; and the similitude, the correspondence between them, is not more, I think, than one might reasonably expect between poets of the same period who have arrived at the same stage in the development of the national literature, and, while preserving their individual characteristics, are necessarily affected by the prevailing conditions of the public taste and feeling. The

peculiar metrical product of the Augustan age is, unquestionably, the heroic couplet. But it was used as a metrical form by Shakespeare himself, by Ben Jonson, by William Browne, by Spenser. Waller took it up, and made it a more regular and harmonious instrument; and Pope bestowed upon it a new polish and brilliancy, while setting it, at the same time, to one balanced, uniformly-cadenced measure, which, from its facility, was eagerly accepted by his contemporaries. In all these transitions, however, it remained an English metrical form; created to satisfy an English need, and variously moulded to satisfy the English ear or the wants of those who used it.

To resume our chronology: at Queen Anne's accession, Addison, pre-eminently a Queen Anne's poet, was thirty years old; Swift, whose fame is built up on his prose and not his poetry, was thirty-five; Allan Ramsay, the Scotch poet, was sixteen; Somerville was twenty-five; Young was eighteen; Gay, fourteen; Tickell, sixteen; Parnell, twenty-three; Ambrose Philips, thirty-one; and Alexander Pope, fourteen. During the twelve years of her reign were born —Thomson in 1700; Dr Johnson and William Somerville in 1709; John Wesley in 1703; Richard Glover, the author of *Leonidas*, in 1712; Armstrong in 1709; and William Shenstone in 1714.

The two Scotch poets of the period were Allan Ramsay, author of *The Gentle Shepherd*, born in 1686; and Robert Blair, the author of *The Grave*, born in 1699.

Anne, Countess of Winchelsea, was born about 1660, at Sidmonton, in Hampshire, the residence of her father, Sir William Kingsmill. She married Heneage Finch, fourth Earl of Winchelsea, and died without issue on the 5th of August 1720. Her works include *The Spleen*, published in 1701; a so-called Pindaric Ode; *The Prodigy*, 1706; *Miscellaneous Poems*, 1713; and *Aristomenes*, a Tragedy. Though the last-named work assumes a dramatic form, it

is wholly wanting in the dramatic spirit. Nor is the conduct of the plot, which is founded on the well-known Lacedemonian story, marked by any constructive skill. But it contains some smoothly and effectively written passages.

To the later generation of readers Lady Winchelsea, as a poetess, was introduced by Wordsworth, who, in the Essay affixed to his *Lyrical Ballads*, observed, with scant justice to some of her contemporaries, that the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Thomson's *Seasons* embodied no new image of external nature, a passage or two in Pope's *Windsor Forest* and the *Nocturnal Reverie* of Lady Winchelsea excepted. It was well that the attention of lovers of poetry —and of the poetry of nature—should thus be directed to a very charming poem, which, accumulating a number of true and pleasing images, combines them in a picture steeped in the sweet repose of night. Among her miscellaneous pieces are others of a quite exceptional value, especially the beautiful address to the Nightingale, which its harmonic strength and melodious sweetness impress with a rare and novel distinction, and connect with the poetry of Keats and Shelley, neither of whom need have been ashamed to own it:—

'Exert thy voice, sweet harbinger of Spring!
This moment is thy time to sing,
This moment I attend to praise,
And set my numbers to thy lays;
Free as thine shall be my song,
As thy music, short or long;
Poets, wild as thou, were born,
Pleasing best when unconfined,
When to please is least designed.
Soothing but their cares to rest;
Cares do still their thoughts molest.
And still the unhappy poet's breast
Like thine, when best he sings, is placed against a thorn.

She begins ! let all be still !
Muse, thy promise now fulfil !
Sweet ! oh sweet ! still sweeter yet !
Can thy words such accents fit ?
Can'st these syllables refine,
With a sense that shall retain
Still some spirit of the brain,
Till with sounds like those it join ?
'Twill not be ! then change thy note,
Let diversion shake thy throat !
Hark ! diversion now she tries,
Yet as far the Muse outflies !
Cease, then, prithee, cease thy tune,
Trifler, wilt thou sing till June ?
Till thy business all lies waste,
And the time of building's past !
Thus we poets that have speech,—
Unlike what thy forests teach,—
If a fluent vein be shown,
That's transcendent to our own ;
Criticise, reform or preach,
Censuring what we cannot reach.'

The foregoing seems to me very sweet and dainty, with a happy refinement of expression. The *Nocturnal Reverie* shows a close, keen faculty of observation, and a deep, but almost unconscious, love of nature ; it does not, in my opinion, reach so high a strain :—

'In such a night. . . .
When darkened graves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear ;
When through the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabric awful in repose ;
While sun-burned hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling haycocks thicken up the vale ;
When the loosed horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing thro' the adjoining meads ;
Whose stealing pace and lengthened shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear ;
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine rechew the cud ;

When curlews cry beneath the village walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;
Their short-lived jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures, whilst tyrant Man doth sleep;
When a sedate content the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals;
But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something too high for syllables to speak;
Till the free soul to a composedness charmed,
Finding the elements of rage disarmed,
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,
Joys in the inferior world, and thinks it like her own;
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks and all's confused again;
Our cares, our toils, our clamours are renewed,
Our pleasures, seldom reached, again pursued.'

Lady Winchelsea's poems are so little known that one more quotation will not be superfluous. In the subjoined stanzas she reaches, perhaps, her highest note:—

'How gaily is at first begun
Our life's uncertain race!
Whilst yet that sprightly morning sun,
With which we just set out to run,
Enlightens all the place.

How smiling the world's prospect lies!
How tempting to go through!
Not Canaan to that prophet's eyes,
From Pisgah, with a sweet surprise,
Did more inviting show.

How soft the first ideas prove
Which wander through our minds!
How full the joys, how free the love,
Which does that early season move,
As flowers the western winds!

Our sighs are then but vernal air,
But April drops are tears,
Which swiftly passing, all grows fair,
Whilst beauty compensates our care,
And youth each vapour clears.

But oh, too soon, alas ! we climb,
  Scarce feeling we ascend
The gently rising hill of Time,
From whence with grief we see that prime
  And all its sweetness end.

The die now cast, our station known,
  Fond expectation past ;
The thorns which former days had sown,
To crops of late repentance grown,
  Through which we toil at last.

Whilst every care's a driving harm,
  That helps to bear us down ;
Which faded smiles no more can charm,
But every tear's a winter storm,
  And every look's a frown.'

Among the minor poets of this so-called 'Augustan age' was THOMAS TICKELL, who is best remembered, perhaps, as the friend of Addison. He was the son of a clergyman, and born at Bridekirk, near Carlisle, in 1686. While a student at Queen's College, Oxford, he wrote some verses in praise of Addison's opera of 'Rosamond,' and sent them to Addison, who was so much gratified by them that he sought out the young writer, and honoured him with his friendship. When he went to Ireland as Chief Secretary, Tickell accompanied him. Afterwards he was employed as a contributor to the *Spectator* and the *Guardian*, and recognised as one of the most promising of the younger men of letters of the day. In the twenty-second number of the *Guardian* appeared the first of his series of five essays on Pastoral Poetry, in which, with more zeal than critical judgment, he bestowed a fervid eulogium upon Addison's and his own friend, Ambrose Philips, declaring that Theocritus had bequeathed his mantle to Virgil, Virgil to his son Spenser, and Spenser to his eldest born Philips. As Pope had written pastorals, he not unnaturally took umbrage at a verdict which indirectly denied

him any rank as a pastoral poet; and revenged himself after his own fashion. He wrote a paper for the *Guardian*, which assumed to belong to the before-mentioned series, and in this he compared Pope and Philips—ironically praising Philips when most absurd and unnatural, and ironically criticising Virgil so as to reflect credit upon himself.

In January 1715, Bernard Lintot published the first volume of Pope's translation of the *Iliad*; and in the same week Jacob Tonson issued, in pamphlet form, *The First Book of Homer's Iliad, Translated by Mr Tickell.* Prefixed to the latter was the following notification :—

> To the Reader,—I must inform the reader that when I began this First Book, I had some thoughts of translating the whole *Iliad;* but had the pleasure of being diverted from that design by finding the work was fallen into a much abler hand. I would not, therefore, be thought to have any other view in publishing this small specimen of Homer's *Iliad*, than to bespeak, if possible, the favour of the public to a translation of Homer's *Odysseus*, wherein I have already made some progress.

The courtesy of these lines should have disarmed Pope's splenetic temper; but he regarded the publication of a version of any part of the *Iliad* much as the occupant of a throne regards the manifesto of any other claimant to it, and attributed Tickell's unintended rivalry to Addison's instigation. Into the literary quarrel which thus originated political spirit was soon infused, and while Addison and the Whigs pronounced in favour of Tickell's translation, as more faithfully reflecting the Homeric poetry, the Tories declared for Pope's. Criticism ran riot at Button's coffee-house, and Addison gave it as his opinion that Pope's and Tickell's were both well done, but that Tickell's had more of Homer. The result was that scathing satire upon Addison in the character of Atticus, which owes part of its force to the fact that his virtues are honestly recognised, while his faults and failings are unsparingly exposed.

Addison continued his intimacy with Tickell, and appointed him Under-Secretary when, in 1717, he was made Secretary of State. He recommended him on his deathbed to the friendly care of Mr Secretary Craggs, and bequeathed to him the task of collecting and publishing his works. This cordial and unchanging patronage Tickell repaid by prefixing to his edition of Addison's writings an 'In Memoriam' of exceptional beauty. In this famous elegy his subject bears him up on a strong and elevated wing, so that he rises to a height which he had never before and never afterwards attained. The essential mediocrity of his style is conspicuous, however, in the dull and dreary semi-allegorical poem of *Kensington Gardens*, which he published in 1722. Two years later he was appointed Secretary to the Lords-Justices of Ireland, and thenceforward he abandoned the flowery ways of literature. He died at Bath, in 1740, but was buried at Glasnevin, near Dublin, where a monumental tablet perpetuates his conviction that 'his highest honour was that of having been the friend of Addison.'

The pathos, the passion, and the dignity of the Addisonian elegy surprise the reader who is acquainted only with Tickell's other and inferior works:—

> 'Can I forget the dismal night, that gave
> My soul's best poet for ever to the grave?
> How silent did his old companions tread,
> By midnight lamps, the mansions of the dead.
> Thro' breathing statues, then unheeded things,
> Thro' rows of warriors, and thro' walks of kings!
> What awe did the slow solemn knell inspire,
> The pealing organ and the pausing choir;
> The duties by the lawn-robed prelate paid;
> And the last words that dust to dust conveyed!
> While speechless o'er thy closing grave we bend,
> Accept these tears, thou dear departed friend,
> Oh, gone for ever, take this long adieu!'

The solemn beauty of the conclusion will always be recognised:—

'That awful form (which, so ye heavens decree,
Must still be loved and still deplored by me)
In nightly visions seldom fails to rise,
Or, roused by fancy, meets my waking eyes.
If business calls, or crowded courts invite,
Th' unblemished statesman seems to strike my sight;
If in the stage I seek to soothe my care,
I meet his soul, which breathes in Cato there;
If pensive to the rural shades I rove,
His shape o'ertakes me in the lonely grove:
'Twas there of Just and Good he reasoned strong,
Cleared some great truth or raised some serious song;
There patient showed us the wise course to steer,
A candid censor and a friend severe;
There taught us how to live; and (oh! too high
The price of knowledge) taught us how to die.'

THOMAS PARNELL was descended from an ancient Cheshire family. His father, a strict Puritan, and an old Commonwealth man, crossed the Channel at the Restoration, and purchased lands in Ireland, which, with the Cheshire patrimony, were inherited by his son. The future poet was born in Dublin in 1679, and educated there in the school of a certain Dr Jones. He seems as a schoolboy to have been endowed with a wonderfully retentive memory, and to have been able to repeat forty lines of any book after a single reading. At the age of thirteen, he was sent to Trinity College, where he acquired an unusually sound and wide knowledge of the classics. He took the degree of M.A. in July 1700, and, in the same year, though under the canonical age, was ordained a deacon. Three years later, and the fortunate young man was admitted into priest's orders. In 1705, at the age of twenty-six, he received the Archdeaconry of Clogher. About the same time he married Miss Anne Minchin, a young lady of rare physical and intellectual charms, by whom he had two sons, who died young, and a daughter, who long survived him.

By birth and breeding Parnell was a Whig, but on coming to England he suddenly deserted to the Tory

side, and sharing with Swift and Addison, and other wits, the Lord Treasurer's favour, was admitted to his most intimate confidence. On one occasion, being informed that Parnell waited with the crowd of suitors in the outer room, Harley went, with his treasurer's staff in his hand, to inquire for him. Parnell was ambitious of fame and advancement, and not very scrupulous as to the means by which they were to be secured; and while loitering in London he frequently preached in different churches, his eloquence and scholarship drawing large congregations. The Queen's death, however, was as crushing a blow to his hopes as to those of many other young Tories.

But a still severer blow was the death of his wife. Grieving for her with a grief which overpowered his judgment, he unhappily gave way to intemperance. Yet the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the time must have been curiously lax, or Parnell's drinking habits were not so extravagant as some of his contemporaries affect to have believed; for Archbishop King gave him a prebendal stall in 1713, and the vicarage of Finglass in 1716. These preferments he did not long enjoy,—dying at Chester in July 1717, in his thirty-eighth year, while on his way to Ireland.

Life with Parnell seems to have been a 'fitful fever.' A man of intense susceptibility, he was for ever alternating between the extremes of gaiety and depression. Goldsmith, on the authority of people who knew him, says:—

> He was the most capable man in the world to make the happiness of those he conversed with, and the least able to secure his own. He wanted that evenness of disposition which bears disappointment with phlegm, and joy with indifference. He was ever much elated or depressed, and his whole life spent in agony or rapture. But the turbulence of these passions only affected himself, and never those about him; he knew the ridicule of his own character, and very effectually raised the mirth of his companions as well at his vexations as his triumphs.
>
> How much his company was desired, appears from the extensiveness of his connections and the number of his friends. Even before

he made any figure in the literary world, his friendship was sought by persons of every rank and party. The wits at that time differed a good deal from those who are most eminent for their understanding at present. It would now be thought a very indifferent sign of a writer's good sense, to disclaim his private friends for happening to be of a different party in politics, but it was then otherwise. The Whig wits held the Tory wits in great contempt, and those retaliated in their turn. At the head of one party were Addison, Steele, and Congreve; at that of the other, Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot. Parnell was a friend to both sides, and with a liberality becoming a scholar, scorned all those trifling distinctions that are noisy for the time and ridiculous to posterity. Nor did he emancipate himself from these without some opposition from home. Having been the son of a commonwealth's man, his Tory connections on this side of the water gave his friends in Ireland great offence; they were much enraged to see him keep company with Pope, Swift, and Gay; they blamed his undistinguishing taste, and wondered what pleasure he could find in the conversation of men who approved the treaty of Utrecht, and disliked the Duke of Marlborough.

Among the poets of the earlier Augustan age, Parnell occupies a foremost place—only second, indeed, to Pope, and striking sometimes a truer and deeper, as well as sadder, note than Pope himself. It was from Pope, however, that he partly derived his inspiration, though it is clear that he had studied the elder poets, and especially Milton. But he was no imitator; it is from his own harp that he brings forth his clear and sonorous strain. And, in truth, he may be said to have founded a distinct school of poetical form and thought,—the sombre contemplative school of Young and Blair. His *Night Piece on Death* is the unmistakable precursor of *The Night Thoughts* and *The Grave*. I am not sure but that *The Hermit* was in like manner the first of English stories in verse. Whether this be so or not, it must be pronounced most admirable in refinement and symmetry, in the purity of its tone, and the simple grace of its expression.

In his minor pieces he does not appear to advantage; but his translations show him to have been as correct a scholar as he was a finished versifier.

A poet's opinion on a poet may be read with advantage. Here is Thomas Campbell's :—

'The compass of Parnell's poetry,' he says, 'is not extensive, but its tone is peculiarly delightful; not from mere correctness of expression, to which some critics have stinted its praises, but from the graceful and reserved sensibility that accompanied his polished phraseology. The *curiosa felicitas*, the studied happiness of his diction does not spoil its simplicity. His poetry is like a flower that has been trained and planted by the skill of the gardener, but which preserves in its cultured state the natural fragrance of its wilder air.'

The following five passages we take from the *Night Piece on Death* :—

'By the blue taper's trembling light,
No more I waste the wakeful night,
Intent with endless view to pore
The schoolmen and the sages o'er :
Their books from wisdom widely stray.
Or point at best the longest way.
I'll seek a readier path, and go
Where wisdom's surely taught below.'

'How deep yon azure dyes the sky,
Where orbs of gold unnumbered lie,
While through their ranks in silver pride
The nether crescent seems to glide !
The slumbering breeze forgets to breathe,
The lake is smooth and clear beneath,
Where once again the spangled show
Descends to meet our eyes below.
The grounds which on the right aspire,
In dimness from the view retire ;
The left presents a place of graves,
Whose wall the silent water laves.
That steeple guides thy doubtful sight
Among the livid gleams of night.
There pass, with melancholy state,
By all the solemn heaps of fate,
And think, as softly-sad you tread
Above the venerable dead,
"Time was, like thee they life possest,
And time shall be, that thou shalt rest."'

'Those graves, with bending osier bound,
That nameless heave the crumbled ground,
Quick to the glancing thought disclose,
Where toil and poverty repose.
The flat, smooth stones that bear a name,
The chisel's slender help to fame
(Which ere our set of friends decay
Their frequent steps may wear away),
A middle race of mortals own,
Men, half-ambitious, all unknown.'

'The marble tombs that rise on high,
Whose dead in vaulted arches lie,
Whose pillars swell with sculptured stones,
Arms, angels, epitaphs, and bones,
These, all the poor remains of state,
Adorn the rich or praise the great;
Who, while on earth in fame they live,
Are senseless of the fame they give.'

'Ha, while I gaze, pale Cynthia fades,
The bursting earth unveils the shades!
All slow and wan and wrapped with shrouds,
They rise in visionary crowds,
And all with sober accent cry,
"Think, mortal, what it is to die."'

Of 'The Hermit,' which is founded on one of the stories in the *Gesta Romanorum*, Mr Gosse predicates that it may be considered 'the apex and *chef d'œuvre* of Augustan poetry in England.' And with equal truth and elegance he remarks:—

It is more exactly in the French taste than any work that preceded it, and after it English poetry swiftly passed into the degeneracy of classicism. Parnell's poem is the model of a moral *conte:* the movement is dignified and rapid, the action and reflection are balanced with exquisite skill, the surprise is admirably prepared, and the treatment never flags from beginning to end. The French complaint of the lack of style in our minor poetry might have been triumphantly confronted by the Dennises and Budgells of the infancy of our criticism, by a reference to Parnell's masterpiece, which, if we are ready to grant that polish, elegance, and symmetry are the main elements of poetry, could scarcely be surpassed in any language.

The poem is accessible to most readers in our current anthologies; but to the fluent harmony of the following passage I would fain direct attention. The simile is a happy one, and very happily expressed:—

'A life so sacred, such serene repose,
Seemed heaven itself till one suggestion rose;
That vice should triumph, virtue vice obey,
This sprung some doubt of Providence's sway:
His hopes no more a certain prospect boast,
And all the tenour of his soul is lost.
So when a smooth expanse receives imprest
Calm Nature's image on its watery breast,
Down bend the banks, the trees depending grow,
And skies beneath with answering colours glow:
But if a stone the gentle scene divide,
Swift ruffling circles curl on every side,
And glimmering fragments of a broken sun—
Banks, trees, and skies in thick disorder run.'

After Parnell's death, Pope collected and published his poems, with a dedication to Harley, Earl of Oxford (1721).

To fall to dumb forgetfulness a prey would seem to have been the destiny appointed for Sir Samuel Garth's mock-heroic poem of *The Dispensary*. Yet I think it merited a better fate; for though the subject has lost its interest, the treatment is effective, and the versification fluent and vigorous. Its author handles the heroic couplet of Dryden with a skill scarcely surpassed by any of his contemporaries. But its want of living interest is a fatal defect. We soon weary of its monotony of plan; its imagery is not pleasing; and the professional quarrel on which it is based can have no possible interest for the modern reader. Its descriptive passages, however, are excellent in colouring:—

'Distant from hence beyond a waste of plains,
Proud Teneriffe, his giant-brother, reigns;
With breathing fire his pitchy nostrils glow,
As from his sides he shakes the fleecy snow.

Around this hoary prince, from watery beds,
His subject-islands raise their verdant heads;
The waves so gently wash each rising hill,
The land seems floating, and the ocean still.
Eternal spring with smiling verdure here
Warms the mild air and crowns the youthful year.
Those happy isles, where endless pleasures wait,
Are styled by tuneful bards—the Fortunate.'

SAMUEL GARTH was born at Bolan, in the county of Durham, about 1660. He was educated at Peterhouse, Cambridge, where, in 1691, he took the degree of M.D. Coming to London, he was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in 1693, and practised with exceptional success. His wit and culture introduced him into the coterie of men of letters which then governed London society, and his place among them was assured by his mock heroic poem of *The Dispensary*, published in 1699. The College of Physicians, some twelve years previously, had insisted that its fellows and licentiates should advise the poor gratuitously; but the effect of this charitable movement was to a great extent neutralised by the high price of even the commonest drugs; and, after a prolonged struggle with the profession, Garth and his fellow-physicians raised a subscription for the establishment, within the College itself, of a dispensary, at which medicines might be supplied to the poor at cost price. The apothecaries retaliated by supplying gratuitous prescriptions also; and hence arose the great war, which Garth, taking his idea from Boileau's *Le Lutrin*, celebrated in his poetic extravaganza.

On the death of Dryden, it was Garth who was selected to pronounce a Latin oration over the poet's remains.[1]

[1] It was to his exertions Dryden owed this recognition of his fame. Ward, in the *London Spy*, says,—'They had like to let him pass in private to his grave, without those funeral obsequies suitable to his greatness, had it not been for that true British worthy, who, meeting with the venerable remains of the neglected bard passing silently in a coach, unregarded to his last home,

An intimate friend of Addison,[1] and associated in social intercourse with Swift and Gay, he was always welcome in the merry circle which assembled at the 'Devil' tavern.[2] On the accession of George I. he was knighted with Marlborough's sword, and his Whig principles and professional skill were rewarded with the double appointment of Physician-in-Ordinary to the King and Physician-General to the Army. In 1717 he issued an edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 'translated by the most eminent hands.' He died on the 18th of January 1718-19. It is said that on his death-bed he remarked that he was glad he was dying, for he was weary of having his shoes pulled on and off—an expression of that feeling of satiety and *ennui* arising from the cynical indifferentism of the age, which was felt by so many of his contemporaries.[3]

The Augustan age boasted another poetical member of the College of Physicians in ponderous Sir RICHARD BLACKMORE. He came of a good old Wiltshire family; was born about 1650, or ten years before his fellow-knight,

ordered the corpse, by the consent of his few friends that attended him, to be respited from so obscure an interment; and most generously undertook, at his own expense, to revive his worth in the minds of a forgetful people, by bestowing on his peaceful dust a solemn funeral answerable to his merit.'

[1] Garth was a member of the Kit Cat Club; and it is said that at one of his meetings he sat so long over his wine, as to compel from Steele a hint of the claims his patients had upon his time. Garth replied, that it mattered nothing whether he saw them that night or next morning; for, he added, nine had such bad constitutions that no physician could save them, and the other six had such good ones that all the physicians in the world could not kill them.

[2] 'The Devil and St Dunstan,' No. 2 Fleet Street.

[3] Pope refers to his friend's death in terms of unusual affection. Writing to Jervas, the painter, he says (December 21, 1718):—'The best-natured of men, Sir Samuel Garth, has left me in the truest concern for his loss. His death was very heroical, and yet unaffected enough to have made a saint or a philosopher famous. But ill tongues and worse hearts have branded even his last moments, as wrongfully as they did his life, with irreligion. You must have heard many tales on this subject; but if ever there was a good Christian without knowing himself to be so, it was Dr Garth.'

Sir Samuel Garth, whom he outlived by fifteen years; was educated at Westminster School and Edmund Hall, Oxford; completed his medical training at Padua; and soon obtained an extensive and lucrative practice in London. He was knighted by William III., and afterwards appointed Assessor of the College of Physicians. So fortunate a man should have overflowed with charity for all mankind; yet, unsatisfied with his licence to blister, bleed, and dose his fellows, he inflicted on them, in 1695, a so-called epic poem, in ten books, entitled *Prince Arthur*. In his preface he attacked the poets of the day, and especially Dryden, for their impurity, and professed that he had written his epic—in the intervals of business, in coffee-houses, and on his visits to his patients—in order to rescue the Muses 'out of the hands of those ravishers, and restore them to their sweet and chaste mansions, and engage them in an employment suitable to their dignity.' As if dulness spelt decency! 'The purpose of epic poetry,' he said, 'was to give more right and just conceptions of religion and virtue;' and he explained that he had endeavoured to form himself on Virgil's model, while substituting Christian for pagan deities. His hero sails to the Saxon coast, but on the voyage is much troubled by the changes of weather, according as good spirits or ill prevail. He and his followers succeed, however, in landing on the shore of Albion—then ruled by a king named Hoel—where

> 'Rich wine of Burgundy and choice champagne
> Relieve the toil they suffered on the main;
> But what more cheered them than their meats and wine
> Was wise instruction and discourse divine,
> From god-like Arthur's mouth.'

Hoel is interviewed by the Fury Persecution, and is bent on doing wicked things, when angelic influence sends him to Arthur, and the British prince's 'wise instruction and discourse divine' fill up a couple of books with the

dreariest platitudes imaginable. In the fourth book a grand banquet is given by Hoel, at which Lucius tells Prince Arthur's story:—

> 'How sad a task do your commands impose
> Which must renew insufferable woes . . .'

No, not 'insufferable,' as the reader, more fortunate than Hoel and his guests, can escape the wearisome narration by skipping a dozen pages or so. In the end Prince Arthur makes war against a certain King Tollo, and, defeating and killing him, wins a kingdom and a bride.

Never did egregious poetaster expose himself more nakedly to the merciless attacks of the wits. In his twofold vocation of physician and poet he was doubly exposed to their shafts. Even a later satirist has taken up the unequal contention, and Thomas Moore is responsible for the following epigram:—

> 'Twas in his carriage the sublime
> Sir Richard Blackmore used to rhyme,
> And (if the wits don't do him wrong)
> 'Twixt death and epics passed his time
> Scribbling and killing all day long.'

Calmly pursuing the dull tenor of his way, the physician-poetaster poured out ream upon ream of versified prose:—*King Arthur*, in twelve books, in 1697; *Paraphrase on the Book of Job, the Songs of Moses, Deborah, and David, and on Four Select Psalms, some Chapters of Isaiah, and the Third Chapter of Habakkuk*, in 1700; *A Satire upon Wit*, in the same year; *Elijah*, in 1705; *Creation*, in 1712; and *King Alfred*, in 1713. He joined with John Hughes in establishing and carrying on (for about forty numbers) the periodical known by the unhappy title of *The Lay Monk*.

'The Cheapside Knight,' as the wits called him, because he resided at Sadler's Hall, Cheapside, won the respect of Locke and Addison by the sincerity of his religious con-

victions, and Dr Johnson included his *Creation* in his edition of the Poets, remarking that it wants neither harmony of numbers, accuracy of thought, nor elegance of diction. Addison strangely says of it,—'The work was written with so good an intention, and executed with so great a mastery, that it deserves to be looked upon as one of the most useful and noble productions in our English verse. The reader cannot but be pleased to find all the depths of philosophy enhanced by all the charms of poetry, and to see so great a strength of reason amidst so beautiful a redundancy of the imagination.' Yet, in spite of this favourable criticism, Blackmore's 'poems,' the *Creation* included, are neither more nor less than volumes of rhymed commonplaces, without force, fervour, or distinction. The author's good intentions cannot be denied; but good intentions do not make poetry; and we feel, with Cowper, that the pious knight has committed 'more absurdities in verse than any writer of our country.' No criticism in *The Dunciad* is better justified than that which deals with 'sonorous Blackmore's strain':—

> 'Walls, steeples, skies, bray[1] back to him again.
> In Tot'nam Fields the brethren, with amaze,
> Prick all their ears up, and forget to graze!
> Long Chancery Lane retentive rolls the sound,
> And courts to courts return it round and round;
> Thames wafts it thence to Rufus' roaring hall,
> And Hungford re-echoes bawl for bawl.
> All hail him victor in both gifts of song,
> Who sings so loudly, and who sings so long.'

The stupendous dreariness of his epics is satirised in Prior's epigram 'in Chaucer's style':—

> 'Full oft doth Mat with Topaz dine,
> Eateth baked meats, drinketh Greek wine;

[1] 'The poet here celebrated,' says Pope, 'delighted much in the word *bray*, which he endeavoured to ennoble by applying it to the sound of armour, war, etc.'

But Topaz his own worke rehearseth,
And Mat mote praise what Topaz verseth.
Now sure as priest did e'er shrive sinner,
Fully hardly earneth Matt his dinner.'

Sir Richard was the author of *Instructions to Vanderbank*, written in imitation of Denham's *Advice to a Painter*. It is happily ridiculed by Steele in the *Tatler*. He died in 1729.

The pastoral poetry of the Augustan age, with its affectation and sickly sentimentality, found its most popular representative in AMBROSE PHILIPS, who, born in 1671, of a good Leicestershire family, and educated at St John's College, Cambridge, came to London in the reign of William III., and plunged at once into the best literary society. He was an ardent Whig, and, in 1700, published the *Life of Archbishop Williams*, in which he denounced the ecclesiastical policy of Laud, and expounded the Whig principles of civil and religious liberty. He became a regular attendant at Button's, and enjoyed Addison's intimate friendship. In 1709 he made his appearance as a poet; six pastorals by Ambrose Philips figuring in Tonson's *Miscellany* alongside with four by Pope. Tickell, as became a member of the Addisonian clique, immediately lauded the Pastorals of Ambrose in the *Spectator*, pronouncing them the finest in the language. But artificial in structure as were Pope's melodious couplets, they read like genuine poetic utterances when contrasted with the frigid feebleness of the Ambrosian rhymes. Neither gods nor columns could endure such verse as the following :—

'Oh! quit thy wonted scorn, relentless fair,
Ere, lingering long, I perish through despair.
Had Rosalind been mistress of my mind,
Though not so fair, she would have proved more kind.
Oh think, unwitting maid, while yet is time,
How flying years impair thy youthful prime!

Thy virgin bloom will not for ever stay,
And flowers, though left ungathered, will decay:
The flowers, anon, returning seasons bring,
But beauty faded has no second spring.
My words are wind! She, deaf to all my cries,
Takes pleasure in the mischief of her eyes.
Like frisking heifer, born in flowery meads,
She gads where'er her roving fancy leads,
Yet still from me. Ah me! the tiresome chase!
Shy as the fawn, she flies my fond embrace.
She flies, indeed, but ever leaves behind,
Fly where she will, her likeness in my mind.'

That such stuff as this should be called poetry, and praised by critics, and devoured by the public, is one of the most curious features of an age so remarkable for its intellectual activity as was that of Queen Anne.

Philips did not relish Pope's satirical attack—perhaps he felt its justice—and he threatened to inflict personal chastisement on his assailant by whipping him with a rod, which he hung up *in terrorem* in Button's coffee-house. The feud thus unhappily initiated was protracted throughout the lives of the two adversaries, and Pope never lost an opportunity of ridiculing the author of *The Pastorals*. Philips, however, was a man of various attainments and good character; and entering the public service, obtained a succession of profitable employments. In 1715 he was appointed paymaster of the Lottery. Afterwards he acted as secretary to the Primate of Ireland, Archbishop Boulter; and, in 1734, was made Registrar of the Prerogative Court. His savings enabled him to purchase an annuity of four hundred pounds per annum, with which he hoped to spend in England some years of tranquil happiness. He reached a ripe old age, and died in his house at Vauxhall, on the 18th of June 1749, surviving his famous enemy five years.

Philips acquired some celebrity in his time for his version of Racine's '*Andromaque*,' which, under the title

of 'The Distressed Mother,' was acted at Drury Lane in 1711. It is little more than a translation, and a cold and prosy one; and its success was mainly due to the persevering efforts of the translator's friends. Addison wrote for it a felicitous epilogue, which was encored on the first three nights of the performance of the play. Before its production, he eulogised it in *The Spectator;* and during its run, in another *Spectator*, described the powerful impression it had made upon Sir Roger de Coverley.[1]

While at Copenhagen in 1739, Philips wrote an *Epistle to the Earl of Dorset*, which good-natured Steele declared to be 'as fine a piece as we had ever had,' and equally good-natured Goldsmith pronounced 'incomparably fine. Observe the contrast between the Then and the Now! Then, the critic was forgotten in the friend; now, the friend is lost in the critic. We are more candid and less sincere. The aforesaid epistle is almost of as much value as an average Oxford prize-poem; it is weak, cold, and platitudinous. To me his translations from Sappho do not appear of much higher merit, though Addison highly commended them; and I take it that his best, if not his only good work, is his poetry of childhood—so little appreciated by the taste of his age that it procured him from Henry Carey the immortal nickname of Namby-Pamby. But his Odes to 'The Infant Daughter of Lord Carteret,' and to 'Miss Charlotte Putteney in her Mother's Arms,' are warm with a tender and refined fancy, and enriched by a graceful fluency of versification,—as I think the following specimen will convince the reader:—

'Timely blossom, infant fair,
Fondling of a happy pair,
Every morn and every night
Their solicitous delight,
Sleeping, waking, ill at ease,
Pleasing, without skill to please;

[1] No. 335, Tuesday, March 25th, 1711.

Little gossip, blithe and hale,
Tattling many a broken tale,
Singing many a tuneless song,
Lavish of a heedless tongue.
Simple maiden, void of art,
Babbling out the very heart,
Yet abandoned to thy will,
Yet imagining no ill,
Yet too innocent to blush,
Like the linnet in the bush,
To the mother linnet's note,
Moduling her slender throat,
Chirping forth thy petty joys,
Wanton in the change of toys,
Like the linnet green in May,
Flitting to each blooming spray.
Wearied then, and glad of rest,
Like the linnet in the nest.
This thy present happy lot,
This in time will be forgot:
Other pleasures, other cares,
Ever busy Time prepares.
And thou shalt in thy daughter see
This picture once resembled thee.'

Another Philips calls for notice here—JOHN PHILIPS, the son of Dr Stephen Philips, Archdeacon of Salop, and Vicar of Bampton, in Oxfordshire. He was born on the last day but one in the year 1676: inheriting great delicacy of constitution, he was educated at home until he was old enough to be sent to Winchester School, where, for the same reason, he was exempted from its well-known severity of discipline. His leisure hours were given up to the study of polite letters, and especially of Milton, whose stately versification he took a delight in imitating. In 1694 he was removed to Christ Church, Oxford, and that famous college can hardly ever have possessed a student of more gentle and amiable character. He made a host of friends, and—O fortunate young man!—not a single enemy. Even his fine parts and elegant scholarship

failed to excite jealousy; or any jealousy they excited died down under the genial influence of his rare *bonhomie*. He was intended for the medical profession, but his feeble health proved an insurmountable obstacle, and so he continued to dally with the poets, to translate Virgil and imitate Milton. An admirable piece of Miltonic burlesque, *The Splendid Shilling*, which he had written in order to suggest to an extravagant friend the value of that coin, got surreptitiously into print, was circulated among the wits, and secured for him, when he went to London, a cordial reception. St John (afterwards Lord Bolingbroke) lodged him in his own house; and when Lord Halifax commissioned Addison to write a poem in honour of the victory of Blenheim, he and Harley encouraged Philips to attempt the same theme. The result was a poem in his favourite blank verse, and with echoes of Milton pervading it, entitled *Blenheim*, which has some passages of more than ordinary distinction. In the same year (1705) appeared a corrected edition of *The Splendid Shilling;* and in 1706, a kind of English Georgic, in two books, *Cyder*, which may still be read with pleasure. I have already noted the early age at which so many of the Queen Anne poets died. Philips did not live to complete his thirty-third year, but died at Hereford, in February 1708, just as he had begun to meditate a more ambitious strain, rich in the lofty subjects of the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment.

As Ambrose Philips lives in no small measure through the praise of Addison, so is the memory of WILLIAM WALSH largely preserved through the praise of Dryden and Pope. The exquisite compliment paid to him by the latter is probably well known to every reader:—

> 'To him the wit of Greece and Rome was known,
> And every author's merit but his own;

Such late was Walsh—the Muse's judge and friend,
Who justly knew to blame or to commend;
To failings mild, but zealous to desert,
The clearest head and the sincerest heart.'[1]

But Walsh has merits of his own which entitle him to remembrance.

'The Propertius of the Restoration,' says Gosse, 'he alone among the writers of his age understood the passion of love in an honourable and chivalric sense. Dryden, however, was almost the only person who perceived the moral beauty of Walsh's verse, and certainly was alone in praising his very remarkable *Defence of the Fair Sex*, in which the young poet, in an age given up to selfish gallantry, recommended the honourable equality of the sexes, and the views now understood as the extension of women's rights. He possessed little versatility, but much sweetness in the use of the heroic measure, and a certain delicate insight into emotion. . . . In studying the versification of Pope, the influence of Walsh upon the style of the younger and greater man should not be overlooked.'

Walsh is the author of the only sonnet written in English in a century (between Milton and Warton). The opening of it is very fine; but the close is weak and the surprise not in good taste:—

'What has this bugbear Death that's worth our care?
After a life of pain and sorrow past,
After deluding hopes and dire despair
Death only gives us quiet at the last;
How strangely are our love and hate misplaced!
Freedom we seek, and yet from freedom flee,
Courting those tyrant-sins that chain us fast,
And shunning death that only sets us free.
'Tis not a foolish fear of future pains—
Why should they fear who keep their souls from stains?—
That makes me dread thy terrors, Death, to see;
'Tis not the loss of riches or of fame,
Or the vain toys the vulgar pleasures name,
'Tis nothing, Celia, but the losing thee.'

Everybody must feel that the last line is not in keeping

[1] Pope, *Essay on Criticism.*

with the impressive dignity of the rest of this admirable sonnet.

William Walsh was born about 1663, at Abberley in Worcestershire, and educated at Waltham College, by Ford. Coming up to London, his fortune and culture procured him admission into the best literary society, and his critical faculty was highly appreciated by Dryden. He sat for his county in several Parliaments, and died in 1708, in the prime of life. His prose *Dialogue concerning Women, being a Defence of the Sex, written to Eugenia*, published in 1691, is remarkable for its advanced views; and convinces us that he who could so earnestly advocate the rights of Woman and champion for her a position of equality with Man, must have been gentle by nature as he was by birth. His *Poems* were published in 1691.

Walsh was one of Pope's earliest friends. In 1705, having received from the dramatist Wycherley a copy of the young poet's *Pastorals*, he was so struck by their melodious excellence that he thought it was 'not flattery at all to say, that Virgil had written nothing so good at his age, and expressed a wish to make the acquaintance of the author.' He treated him thereafter with great warmth of kindness, and invited him to spend part of the summer of 1705 at his Worcestershire seat. 'He used to encourage me much,' said Pope to Spence, 'and used to tell me that there was one way left of excelling; for though we had several great poets, we have had only one great poet that was correct; and desired me to make that my study and aim.'

Among the 'lesser lights' which clustered round 'the Bard of Twickenham'—for Pope had his *entourage* as well as Addison—were Elijah Fenton and William Broome. Both were associated with him in his translation of Homer.

Elijah Fenton was born at Shelton, near Newcastle-

under-Lyme, in 1683,—the son of a respectable county attorney. He went to Oxford, and took the degree of B.A. in 1704; but he had no taste for the clerical life,[1] and sought to make other use of his talents and scholarship. For awhile he acted as secretary to the Earl of Orrery, and tutor to his son; after which he obtained a high reputation as a schoolmaster at Sevenoaks. In 1707 he published a volume of *Poems*. Failing to realise some expectations he had formed of the patronage of St John, he was glad to accept the friendly influence of Pope, which procured him employment as secretary to Craggs, then Secretary of State. The death of the latter by small-pox was a great blow to his hopes, but, with a good deal of patience and resolution, he endeavoured to support himself by his pen. He wrote a life of Milton (1727), edited the poems of Waller (1729), and produced the tragedy of 'Mariamne,' by which, according to Dr Young, he cleared fifteen hundred pounds—a great deal more than it was worth. Pope employed him along with Broome in the translation of the *Odyssey*, and he completed the first, fourth, nineteenth, and twentieth books, for which he received three hundred pounds.[2] He next undertook the education of the eldest son of Sir William Turnbull, attending him to Cambridge, and in the vacation residing with Sir William at his seat of Easthampstead, in Berkshire, and acting as auditor of his accounts. Like so many of the Augustan men of letters, he died in the prime of life, in 1730. He seems to have been an amiable and industrious man and a fine scholar; no poet, though a man with poetic tastes; and no doubt he fully merited the warm praise which Pope bestows upon him in his Epitaph:—

> 'This modest stone, what few vain marbles can,
> May truly say, here lies an honest man;

[1] He was, moreover, a Nonjuror by principle, and therefore could not accept holy orders.

[2] Ruffhead says six hundred pounds; but Warton is the better authority.

A poet blessed beyond the poet's fate,
Whom Heaven kept sacred from the proud and great:
Foe to loud praise, and friend to learned ease,
Content with science in the vale of peace.
Calmly he looked on either life, and here
Saw nothing to regret, or there to fear;
From Nature's temperate feast rose satisfied,
Thanked Heaven that he had lived, and that he died.'

His tragedy of 'Mariamne' is founded on the well-known story related by Josephus. Fenton wrote it at the house of his friend, the dramatist Southern, and was encouraged by him to submit it to the public. At first it was offered to Colley Cibber, for the Drury Lane stage; but the petulant manager rejected it, with the discourteous advice that the author would do well to undertake some honest labour, as he could never hope to support himself by his poetry. It was afterwards accepted for the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, where it proved entirely successful, and, in the first season, was acted for seventeen nights.

WILLIAM BROOME was born at Haslington, in Cheshire, in 1689, and educated at St John's College, Cambridge, where he took the degree of M.A. in 1716. His life was singularly uneventful. He published a volume of poems in 1727, married a rich widow, became LL.D. early in the reign of George II., was afterwards vicar of Eye in Suffolk, and died rector of Pulham in Norfolk, in 1745. His sole title to remembrance in the world of letters is derived from his share in Pope's translation of Homer. He rendered into English verse, as smooth and evenly balanced as Pope's own couplets, eight books (the 2d, 6th, 8th, 11th, 12th, 16th, 18th, and 23d), and compiled the notes to the whole of the *Odyssey*, receiving in payment five hundred pounds (four hundred pounds for the eight books and one hundred pounds for the notes). While the work was in progress, Broome (in allusion

to Pope's revising processes) wrote to Fenton, that the poet turned everything he touched into gold; but, as a matter of fact, he meddled very little with the labour of his associates. When the work was done, Broome, to please the vain little poet, appended a note, in which he claimed for himself the translation of three books only, and for Fenton only two, anticipating that the rest of their undertaking would be praised as Pope's by the public, and that afterwards they would receive the glory. But this was not Pope's way, and a quarrel arose between him and his collaborateur, so that the latter, in another letter to Fenton, spoke of their employer as the tyrant of Parnassus, who held all 'its gold and silver mines as privileges of his supremacy, and left coarser metals to the owners of the soil.'

From the friends of Pope we turn to his enemies—that is, to those whom he fancied to be his enemies, or really made so by the perverseness of his disastrous temper. He stabs with two sharp allusions the poet-laureate, LAWRENCE EUSDEN:—

> 'She [the Goddess Dulness] saw . . .
> Eusden eke out Blackmore's endless line.'

> 'Know Eusden thirsts no more for sack or praise;
> He sleeps among the dull of ancient days:
> Safe where no critics damn, no duns molest.'

An equally uncomplimentary reference to this hapless bard occurs in Cook's *Battle of Poets*:—

> 'Eusden, a laurelled bard, by fortune raised,
> By very few was read, by fewer praised.'

Eusden was, however, a respectable man of letters. He wrote a good deal, which posterity has made up its mind to neglect, but in his own time he contrived—with poems and pamphlets, politics and literature—to make so much of a figure that, in 1718, he was gratified with the

post of Poet-Laureate. We do not bestow the laurel-crown now-a-days upon an Eusden; but, after all, a Lawrence Eusden was a more respectable character than Elkanah Settle.

Eusden was born in Yorkshire; educated at Cambridge; took holy orders; and, in 1730, died at Coningsby, in Lincolnshire, of which parish he was rector.

Leonard Welsted, born in 1689, was the author of *The Triumvirate: or, a Letter in Verse from Palemon to Celia at Bath*, in which he had the temerity to attack Pope and his friends. He wrote some miscellaneous poems, elegant but feeble, which were collected and republished by Nichols in 1788. As clerk in ordinary to the Ordnance, he occupied an assured social position, and wrote only for amusement—not for a livelihood. He died in 1747. Pope treats him with great severity. In the treatise on *The Art of Sinking*, he is characterised as a didapper and an eel; in an epigram given in the notes to *The Dunciad*, as a mole. In the poem itself he figures twice. In Book II. he is accused of adulation towards his noble patrons:—

> 'But Welsted most the poet's healing balm
> Strives to extract from his soft-giving palm.
> Unlucky Welsted! thy unfeeling master,
> The more thou ticklest, grips his fist the faster.'

And again his poetry receives a curt, depreciatory notice.

> 'Flow, Welsted flow! like thine inspirer, beer,
> Though stale, not ripe, though thin, yet never clear;
> So sweetly mawkish, and so smoothly dull;
> Steady, not strong; o'erflowing, though not full.'[1]

In the second book of *The Dunciad*, Pope refers to 'a common practice' of the bookseller Curll, the issue of 'vile pieces of obscure hands under the names of eminent

[1] The reader will observe the parody on Sir John Denham's well-known lines about the Thames.

authors,' and makes the Goddess of Dulness address him thus:—

> 'Be thine, my stationer! this magic gift;
> Cook shall be Prior; and Concanen, Swift.'

THOMAS COOK or COOKE, thus unpleasantly immortalised, was a man of considerable acquirements, and the author of a translation of *Hesiod*, which is still held in repute. He was born at Braintree in Essex, in 1700 or 1702, and educated at Felsted Grammar School. Thrown upon the world at an early age, he turned to literature as a means of support, and cultivated it with assiduity in more than one department. Plays, pamphlets, poems, translations—nothing came amiss to his agile pen. Pope speaks of 'a thing called the *Battle of Poets*, in which Philips and Welsted were the heroes, and Swift and Pope utterly routed,'—but it is not without cleverness. 'He also published some malevolent things in the *British*, *London*, and *Daily Journals*; and, at the same time, wrote letters to Mr Pope protesting his innocence.' Cook edited the works of Andrew Marvel; translated the comedies of Terence and the *Amphytrion* of Plautus; and produced several plays, which failed to command the suffrages of the public. He died at Lambeth, on the 29th of December 1756.

'CHARLES GILDON, a writer of criticisms and libels, of the last age, bred at St Omer's with the Jesuits; but renouncing Popery, he published Blount's books against the Divinity of Christ, the Oracles of Reason, etc. He signalised himself as a critic, having written some very bad plays; abused Mr Pope very scandalously in an anonymous pamphlet of the Life of Mr Wycherley, printed by Curll; in another, called *The New Rehearsal*, printed in 1714; in a third, entitled *The Complete Art of English Poetry*, in two volumes; and others.' So runs

the note in *The Dunciad.* In the text he is associated with the critic Dennis:—

> 'O Dennis! Gildon, ah! what ill-starred rage
> Divides a friendship long confirmed by age?
> Blockheads with reason wicked wits abhor,
> But fool with fool is barbarous civil war.
> Embrace, embrace, my sons! be foes no more!
> Nor glad vile poets with true critics' gore.'

Gildon, a writer of more industry than ability, was born at Gillingham in Dorsetshire, 1665. He came of an old Catholic family, and his father, who was a member of the society of Gray's Inn, had suffered much for his loyalty to Charles I. But the younger Gildon, though educated at Douai, under the supervision of Jesuit teachers, and with a view to the priesthood, renounced the religion of his parents before he came of age; and returning to England, plunged into the dissipations of London life, with all the more zest, perhaps, because his early training had been so austere. Having spent in this way the greater part of his patrimony, he married, when about twenty-three, a young lady without any fortune; and then set to work to support his family and himself by literary labour.

After devoting the leisure of several years to the study of theological controversies, Gildon emerged an infidel, and, in 1693, published *The Oracles of Reason*, by Charles Blount, after that author's unhappy death by his own hand—prefixing a pretentious eulogium, and a plausible but illogical defence of self-murder. Dr Leland tells us, however, that he was afterwards convinced of his error, and to some extent made amends for it by publishing, in 1705, a good book, entitled *The Deist's Manual; or, A Rational Enquiry into the Christian Religion*, in which he fervidly vindicates the doctrines of the existence and attributes of God, His providence and government of the world, the immortality of the soul, and a future state.

Most of the Augustan men of letters tried their fortune on the stage, few of them with success. Gildon was among the number of those who failed. It is difficult to conceive of anything drearier than his dramatic works, which have all the extravagance of Nat Lee without his occasional gleams of genius. His ambition was seldom content with anything less than a five-act tragedy, such as 'The Roman Bride's Revenge,' 1697; 'Phaeton; or, The Fatal Divorce,' 1698; 'Love's Victim; or, The Queen of Wales,' 1701; and 'The Patriot; or, The Italian Conspiracy,' 1703. 'Phaeton' is, to a great extent, a version of the 'Medea' of Euripides. For 'The Patriot' Dennis wrote a prologue and Farquhar an epilogue.

The only work of Gildon's which deserves serious notice is his *Complete Art of Poetry*, published in 1718. It was compiled with discrimination and considerable research, and was novel in plan. The first volume consists of criticisms, generally judicious, upon ancient and modern poets; the second, of specimens of their writings. But he had the bad taste to prefer Tickell as a translator, and Philips as a pastoral poet, to Pope, and was punished accordingly. On the whole, he is justly characterised in Boyer's *Political State* as 'a person of great literature but mean genius; who, having attempted several kinds of writing, never gained much reputation in any.' He died on January 12th, 1723-4.

It is, I admit, a considerable licence to include John Dennis among the poets; but there is an obvious convenience in noticing him here among the heroes of *The Dunciad*. His protracted feud with the poet Pope is one of the curiosities of literature, but we must not suffer Pope's malignant ridicule to prejudice us against an honest and able man, or to blind our eyes to his real merits.

JOHN DENNIS, the son of a London saddler, was born

in 1667. He received his early education at Harrow; whence, in 1675, he went to Caius College, Cambridge. After taking his degree of B.A. with credit, he was expelled his college for assaulting and wounding a person who had roused his irritable temper. He then undertook the usual tour in France and Italy; and returning to England a cultivated and clever man, strongly imbued with Whiggish principles, began to take a prominent part in literary society. Among his associates were Dryden, Congreve, Wycherley, and Southern, whose conversation nourished his taste for polite letters, and to whose influence must be attributed the direction taken by his literary efforts. In 1692 he published *The Passion of Byblis;* and in the same year began his critical career with *The Impartial Critic; or, Some Observations on Mr Rymer's late Book, entitled A Short View of Tragedy.* The following year he issued his *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose*, and, in 1695, a poem, *The Court of Death*, on the death of Queen Mary; in 1696, *Letters on Milton and Congreve*, and *Letters upon Several Occasions, written by and between Mr Wycherley, Mr Dryden, Mr Moyle, Mr Congreve, and Mr Dennis*, and *Adverse Remarks on Sir Richard Blackmore's 'Prince Arthur.'* In these critical treatises the reader cannot but be struck by the sound judgment of the author, though his range of view is limited, his taste imperfect, and his irritability of temper only too apparent. In 1697 he published *Miscellaneous Poems*, and in 1698, *The Usefulness of the Stage to the Happiness of Mankind, to Government, and to Religion, occasioned by a late Book written by Jeremy Collier, M.A.*

Dennis at this time was not wholly dependent upon literature. Through the influence of the Duke of Marlborough he had obtained a sinecure in the Customs, worth one hundred and twenty pounds a year. But he lived extravagantly, and he lived carelessly. Debts accumulated upon his shoulders; and to lighten the burden he

disposed of his berth, reserving out of the proceeds, by Lord Halifax's advice, a sufficient sum to purchase an annuity for a term of years. We may add that he outlived this term, and in the decline of life was reduced to extreme indigence. Theophilus Cibber tells an anecdote, probably true, which illustrates the necessities of his decayed position :—

'After he was worn out with age and poverty,' says Cibber, 'he resided within the verge of the court, to prevent danger from his creditors. One Saturday night, he happened to saunter to a public-house, which, in a short time, he discovered to be out of the verge. He was sitting in an open drinking-room, and a man of a suspicious appearance happened to come in. There was something about the man which denoted to Mr Dennis that he was a bailiff. This struck him with a panic; he was afraid his liberty was now at an end; he sat in the utmost solicitude, but durst not offer to stir, lest he should be seized upon. After an hour or two had passed in this painful anxiety, at last the clock struck twelve; when Mr Dennis in ecstacy cried out, addressing himself to the suspected person, "Now, sir, bailiff or no bailiff, I don't care a farthing for you, you have no power now." The man was astonished at his behaviour; and when it was explained to him was so affronted with the suspicion, that had not Mr Dennis found his protection in age, he would probably have smarted for his mistaken opinion of him.'

This persevering penman produced in 1701 a shrewd little manual on the *Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry;* in 1702 a patriotic *Essay on the Navy*, a tract against Dr Sacheverell and his High Church adherents, *Priestcraft Dangerous to Religion and Government;* and *The Monument*, a poem on the death of William III. In 1709 appeared Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, in which he laughed gently at the truculence of Dennis, alluding to his tragedy of 'Appius and Virginia' (1709), to his staring eyes, his partiality to the word 'tremendous,' and his quick irritability.

This was setting fire to a barrel of gunpowder. The testy, self-opinionated, domineering critic immediately pro-

duced his clever, but, of course, unfair *Reflections Critical and Satirical upon a late Rhapsody called 'An Essay on Criticism.'* When *The Rape of the Lock* appeared, Dennis's trenchant pen was again active. Addison next came in for a touch of the lash, his tragedy of *Cato* affording the temptation; whereupon Pope, on behalf of his friend and himself, retorted with his savage *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris of the Frenzy of J. D.*—an attack of such scurrility that the gentler-natured Addison disowned it as one to which 'he could not in honour or conscience be privy.'

A passage in Dennis's *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* brings a serious insinuation against Pope in connection with this incident. He says:—

> In the height of his professions of friendship for Mr Addison, he [Pope] could not bear the success of *Cato*, but prevails upon B. L. [Bernard Lintot] to engage me to write and publish remarks upon that Tragedy; which after I had done, A. P. E., the better to conceal himself from Mr Addison and his friends, writes and publishes a scandalous pamphlet, equally foolish and villanous, in which he pretends that I was in the hands of a quack who cures mad men. So weak is the capacity of this little gentleman, that he did not know that he had done an odious thing; an action detested even by those whom he fondly designed to oblige by it. For Mr Addison was so far from approving of it, that he engaged Sir Richard Steele to write to me.

The battle between Dennis and his opponents—the men whom he criticised and the men who criticised him—belongs now to ancient history, and has little interest for present-day readers. It is satisfactory to relate that, shortly before his death, when he was suffering from the strain of extreme poverty, Thomson, Mallet, and Pope came forward to his assistance, and through their interest procured him a benefit at the Haymarket, at which was recited a Prologue, written for the occasion by Pope. Our admiration of this seeming generosity on the poet's part is considerably abated, however, when we recollect (says Baker) that this boasted prologue was designed throughout as a

sneer on Dennis, whose 'vanity was so strong, or his intellect had become so enfeebled, that he did not perceive its tendency, though he stood behind the scenes and heard it delivered.'

Not long afterwards this sturdy swash-buckler of the pen passed away—closing his stormy life on the 6th of January 1733, when he was in the seventy-seventh year of his age.

His character as a man may be sufficiently gathered from the circumstances we have related of him. As a writer, he was certainly possessed of much erudition, and a considerable share of genius; and had not his self-opinion, of which perhaps no man ever possessed a larger share, induced him to aim at the empire of wit, for which he was by no means qualified, and in consequence thereof led him to treat every one as a rebel, who did not subscribe to his pretended right, he would probably have been allowed, and, from the enjoyment of an easy mind, possibly [have] possessed more merit than appears in many of his writings. In prose, he is far from a bad writer, where abuse and personal scurrility does not mingle itself with his language. In verse, he is extremely unequal, his numbers being at some times spirited and harmonious, and his subjects elevated and judicious, and at others flat, harsh, and puerile. As a dramatic author, he certainly deserves not to be held in any consideration. His plots, excepting that of his 'Plot and no Plot,' which is a political play, are all borrowed, yet in the general not ill-chosen. But his characters are ill-designed and unfinished, his language prosaical, flat, and undramatic, and the conduct of his principal seems heavy, dull, and unimpassioned. In short, though he certainly had judgment, it is evident he had no execution; and so much better a critic is he than a dramatist, that we cannot help subscribing to the opinion of a gentleman, who said of him,—'That he was the most complete instructor for a dramatic poet: since he could teach him to distinguish *good* plays by his *precepts*, and *bad* ones by his examples.'

Dennis wrote nine plays:—

1. 'A Plot and no Plot,' a comedy, satirising the credulity of the Jacobites, acted at Drury Lane in 1697.

2. 'Rinaldo and Armida,' a tragedy, acted at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, 1699. Borrowed from Tasso's 'Gierusalemme,' and curiously transmogrified. The scene is supposed to be a mountain-top in the Canary

Islands. The incidental music was composed by Eccles, except a chorus in Act iv., which was borrowed from Purcell's 'Frost Scene.'

3. 'Iphigenia,' a tragedy, produced at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields in 1700, and condemned with such effect, that the receipts did not pay the cost of the dresses.

4. 'The Comical Gallant; or, The Amours of Sir John Falstaff,' unsuccessfully performed at Drury Lane in 1702, is simply a perversion of Shakespeare's 'Merry Wives of Windsor.'

5. 'Liberty Asserted,' a tragedy, acted with a good deal of success at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields in 1704. The scene is laid at Angie, or Agnia, in Canada; and the plot has a certain freshness from its association with the wars then of frequent occurrence between the Indian nations. Its author's colossal vanity was greatly stimulated by his unwonted success, and he deceived himself into the conviction that his attacks on the French would never be forgiven, and that Louis XIV. would not make peace with England, unless he, John Dennis, was delivered up as a sacrifice. So lively was his apprehension, that when the Congress met at Utrecht, he waited on the Duke of Marlborough, his old patron, and entreated him to use his influence with the plenipotentiaries on his behalf. The Duke with infinite gravity replied, that he was sorry he could render him no assistance, as he had no interest with any of the Queen's then ministers; but added that he did not think him in so much peril as he feared, for that he had taken no care to get *himself* exempted in the Articles of Peace, and yet he could not help fancying that he had done the French *almost* as much injury as Mr Dennis had done.

It is related also that having been invited to a gentleman's house on the coast of Jersey, and very kindly entertained, he was one day walking on the beach, when a ship began to draw in shore. He immediately got it into his head that he was betrayed, and made the best of his way to London without ever taking leave of his hospitable friend, whom he everywhere denounced as a traitor, affirming that he had decoyed him down to his house, and given notice to the French, on purpose that they might surprise him and carry him off.

6. 'Gibraltar; or, The Spanish Adventure,' a comedy performed at Drury Lane Theatre, without success, in 1705. 'The first day it was well acted in most of its parts, but was not suffered to be heard; the second day, for the most part faintly and negligently acted, and consequently was not seen.'

7. 'Orpheus and Eurydice,' a masque; printed in *The Muses' Mercury* for February 1707.

8. 'Appius and Virginia,' a tragedy (to which Pope refers in his *Essay on Criticism*), produced at Drury Lane in 1709. To en-

hance the effects of this play Dennis invented a new kind of thunder, of which the actors highly approved. It was introduced on the first night, but could not reconcile the audience to the dulness of the dialogue, and the play failed. Some nights afterwards, Dennis was in the pit of the theatre when 'Macbeth' was being performed, and hearing his thunder, he rose in a violent passion, and with an oath exclaimed,—'See how these rascals treat me! They will not let my play run, and yet they steal my thunder!'[1]

9. 'The Invader of his Country; or, The Fatal Resentment,' a tragedy, unsuccessfully produced at Drury Lane, is an alteration of Shakespeare's 'Coriolanus.' Dennis, in a dedication to the Duke of Newcastle, who was then Lord Chamberlain, reproaches the management of Drury Lane—(so early began the strife between authors and managers!)—with treating him unjustly. They produced his play on a Wednesday, and consequently his benefit fell on a Friday. 'Now, my lord,' he continues, 'Friday is not only the very worst day of the week for an audience; but this was that particular Friday when a hundred persons who designed to be there, were either gone to meet the king, or preparing here in town to do that duty which was expected from them at his arrival.' The epilogue was written by Cibber.

Everybody knows that the hero of the *Dunciad* in its original form was 'piddling Tibbald,' or Theobald. But Pope afterwards deposed him in favour of Colley Cibber, and there are now but two references to him in the poem.

First:—

> 'Then, hapless Shakespeare, yet of Tibbald sore,
> Wished he had blotted for himself before.'

Second:—

> 'How to her chosen all her works she (the Goddess of Dulness) shows,
> How, with less reading than makes felons 'scape,
> Less human genius than God gives an ape,
> Small thanks to France, and none to Rome or Greece,
> A past, vamped, future, old revived, new piece,
> 'Twixt Plautus, Fletcher, Shakespeare, and Corneille,
> Can make a Cibber, Tibbald, or Ozell.'

[1] In Addison's 'Inventory of Playhouse Property,' in No. 42 of the *Tatler*, occurs,—'A mustard bomb to make thunder with. Another of a bigger sort by Mr D—is's directions, little used.'

In a note to the latter passage you may read :—'LEWIS TIBBALD (as pronounced), or THEOBALD (as written), was bred an attorney, and son to an attorney of Sittenburn [Sittingbourne] in Kent. He was author of some forgotten plays, translations, and other pieces. He was concerned in a paper called *The Censor*, and a translation of Ovid.' Pope proceeds to quote from Dennis :—'There is a notorious idiot, one hight [named] Whachum, who, from an under spur-leather to the law, is become an understrapper to the playhouse, who hath lately burlesqued the Metamorphoses of Ovid by a vile translation, etc. This fellow is concerned in an impertinent paper called *The Censor*.'

The 'fellow' thus severely spoken of by Pope and Dennis was really a man of industry and parts. He had incurred the animosity of the author of *The Dunciad* by bringing out an edition of Shakespeare much superior to his own ; for while Pope's is one of the worst, Theobald's is one of the best. His emendations were dictated by sound judgment and good taste, and have mostly been adopted by later commentators. How felicitous these sometimes were we see in his correction of Mrs Quickly's account of Sir John Falstaff's last hours. The folio read :—'His nose was as sharp as a pen, and a table of greene fields.' Theobald happily suggested as the proper reading :—'His nose was as sharp as a pen, and a'babbled of green fields.'

Theobald published, in 1714, a translation of the *Electra* of Sophocles ; and, in the following year, his tragedy of 'The Persian Princess,' written in his nineteenth year, which had been acted at Drury Lane (for two nights only) in 1707. 'The Perfidious Brother,' which resembles in plot Otway's play of 'The Orphan,' was produced at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields in 1715 ; and, in the same year, our industrious *littérateur* published translations of the *Œdipus* of Sophocles, and of the *Plutus* and *The Clouds* of Aristophanes. The opera of 'Pan and Syrinx' belongs to 1717 ; 'Entertainments in the Lady's Triumph,' to 1718 ; the

masque of 'Decius and Paulina' to the same year; the tragedy of 'Richard the Second,' to 1720; 'The Rape of Proserpine,'[1] to 1725; and the pantomime of 'Harlequin the Sorcerer,' to 1725. Considerable success attended his 'Richard the Second,' probably because it was founded upon Shakespeare. Theobald dedicated it to the Earl of Orrery, who rewarded him with a hundred-pound note, enclosed in an Egyptian pebble snuff-box, mounted in gold. In 1726, he attacked Pope's edition of Shakespeare in a caustic pamphlet, entitled *Shakespeare Restored; or, Specimens of Blunders Committed and Unamended in Pope's Edition of this Poet.* As already stated, Pope revenged himself by making Theobald the hero of his *Dunciad.* Theobald was really a sound Shakespearian critic, and it is difficult to understand the motive which induced him to put before the public as Shakespeare's the play of 'The Double Falsehood; or, The Distressed Lovers,' acted at Drury Lane in 1727. His celebrated edition of Shakespeare appeared in 1733, and at once swept aside Pope's. Thirteen thousand copies of it were sold in a few months. With indefatigable energy Theobald continued his literary work—ready for anything from play to pamphlet, from tragedy to pantomime. The tragedy of 'Orestes' (with incidental music) was acted at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields in 1731; the pantomime of 'Merlin; or, The Devil of Stonehenge,' at Drury Lane. in 1734; 'The Fatal Secret,' a perversion of Webster's 'Duchess of Malfi,' at Covent Garden, in 1735; and 'Orpheus and Eurydice,' an opera, the music by Lampe, in 1739. In 1741 he published the opera of 'The Happy Captive,' founded on 'The History of a Slave,' which occurs in Part I. Book iv. of *Don Quixote.* This laborious penman died in 1744.

Among the very small fry of the Augustan age—men

[1] In this pantomime a cornfield was set on fire; whereupon, as a counter attraction, the managers of Covent Garden produced a piece in which a barn was burned down.

who would now most certainly fail to win the attention of the public—may be named JAMES MOORE SMYTHE, of whom it is recorded that he was the son of Arthur Moore, Esq., one of the Lord Commissioners of Trade in the reign of Queen Anne; that his mother was the daughter of Mr Smythe, who left this his grandson a handsome estate, upon which account he obtained an Act of Parliament to change his name from Moore to Smythe; and that, besides this estate at the death of his grandfather, he had his place of paymaster to the band of Gentlemen Pensioners, jointly with his brother—facts which doubtlessly were once of some importance to Mr James Moore Smythe, but now are not of the slightest concern to anybody.

Smythe was educated at Worcester College, Oxford. He wrote numerous songs and poems—or, as our ancestors judiciously called them, 'copies of verses'—and a comedy, *The Rival Modes*, which, as the work of a reputed wit and man of fashion, awakened great expectations on the part of the public. It was produced at Drury Lane, and fell as flat as a modern farce. In various ways Smythe had contrived to offend Pope, who proceeded to pillory him in *The Dunciad* (Book ii.):—

> 'A poet's form she placed before their eyes,
> And bade the nimblest racer seize the prize;
> No meagre, muse-rid mope, adust and thin,
> In a clean night-gown of his own loose skin;
> But such a bulk as no twelve bards could raise,
> Twelve starveling bards of these degenerate days.
> All as a partridge plump, full fed and fair,
> She formed this image of well-bodied air;
> With pert flat eyes she windowed well its head,
> A brain of feathers and a heart of lead:
> And empty words she gave, and sounding strain,
> But senseless, lifeless, idle, void and vain!
> Never was dashed out, at one lucky hit,
> A fool so just a copy of a wit;
> So like, that critics said, and courtiers swore,
> A wit it was, and called the phantom Moore.'

In a note to this passage, it is referred to 'James Moore Smith, Esq.,' who is accused of having borrowed from Dr Arbuthnot a paper called an Historico-physical Account of the South Sea; and from Mr Pope, the Memoirs of a Parish Clerk, which he kept, it is said, for two years, and read to Dr Young and others as his own. When applied to for them, he pretended they were lost; but as there happened to be another copy of the latter, it came out in Swift and Pope's Miscellanies.

In conjunction with the Duke of Wharton, Smythe began a weekly paper, *The Inquisitor*, intended to promote the interests of the Jacobite party; but the printer took fright at its very free utterances, and desisted from its publication. Smythe died on the 18th of October 1734.

A few lines must be given to JAMES RALPH, one of the professional authors or 'hacks' of the later Augustan age, because he too has been damned to immortal fame by the savage satire of *The Dunciad*. He was born in Philadelphia, in the closing years of the seventeenth, or the opening years of the eighteenth century; and passed the earlier part of his life as a schoolmaster. His active mind, however, desired a wider field of exercise, and in 1725 he came to England, in the company, it is said, of Benjamin Franklin. He seems to have been a man of versatile ability and considerable culture; but he did not enjoy the poet's inspiration, and his early literary efforts, being in verse, failed to win the favour of the public. He tried the stage, but with scarcely greater success. In 1730 his 'Fashionable Lady; or, Harlequin's Opera,' a combination of song and dialogue, after the style of Gay's 'Beggar's Opera,' was produced at Goodman's Fields, and fairly well received; but, in the following year, at the same theatre, his tragedy, adapted from Banks, 'The Fall of the Earl of Essex,' could hardly obtain a hearing. Other departments of literature also witnessed Ralph's activity: as a political

writer he exhibited much ability and spirit, and as a critic he was honest if too vehement. In a poem called 'Sawney,' he was bold enough to attack the great triumvirate, Swift, Pope, and Gay; and Pope retaliated with barbarous ferocity. Alluding to Ralph's poem on 'Night,' the great satirist says,—

> 'Silence, ye wolves, while Ralph to Cynthia howls,
> And makes Night hideous! Answer him, ye owls.'

And in a note he savagely attack's Ralph's private character:—

> James Ralph, a name not known to our author till he wrote a swearing piece called *Sawney*, very abusive of Dr Swift, Mr Gay, and himself. These lines alluded to a thing of his entitled *Night*, a poem. This low writer attended his own works with panegyrics in the journals, and once in particular praised himself highly above Mr Addison, in wretched remarks upon that author's *Account of English Poets*, printed in a London journal, September 17, 1728. He was wholly illiterate, and knew no language, not even French. Being advised to read the rules of dramatic poetry before he began a play, he smiled, and replied, 'Shakespeare wrote without rules.' He ended at last in the common sink of all such writers, a political newspaper, to which he was recommended by his friend Amall, and received a small pittance for pay.

This invective must not be accepted without demur. It is known that Ralph was thoroughly versed in the Latin and French languages, and with Italian not wholly unacquainted. He wrote a clear and forcible prose style, and his *History of England* (beginning at the Restoration) is a work of indubitable merit. As a political pamphleteer he was very formidable. Through Bubb Doddington he was introduced to the Prince of Wales (father of George III.), and attaching himself to the Leicester House party, he attacked the Court with indefatigable energy. The death of the Prince of Wales disappointed the expectations he had formed of official preferment; but they revived at the accession of George III. Gout, however, from which he

had long suffered, brought to a close his busy and restless career on the 24th of January 1762.

Davies, in his *Life of Garrick*, relates the following anecdote:—

> Ralph was frequently with Lord Melcombe (Bubb Doddington), but it is said that a silly mistake of a domestic had very near caused a rupture between them. My lord gave orders to the servant to go to the historian, who lived not far from his lordship, at Isleworth, and take a card with him for a dinner invitation to Mr Ralph and his wife. The fellow mistook the word *card* for *cart*, and set out with one full speed to bring them to his lord's house. This supposed indignity offended the pride of Ralph, who, with great gravity, sent back the messenger and his carriage, with a long expostulatory letter. 'However,' says Davies, very judiciously, 'I cannot vouch for the truth of this story.'

In Nichols' *Anecdotes*, there is an account of certain papers having been committed to Ralph's care by the Prince of Wales, for the purpose of publication under the title of *Memoirs of Prince Titus*. As they contained several statements calculated to damage the Court in public opinion, the Ministry afterwards negotiated their recovery, and succeeded, at the cost of a pension of a hundred and fifty pounds a year to Ralph's daughter.

Besides his *History of England* (1744-6), and *The Other Side of the Question* (a reply to the Duchess of Marlborough), Ralph wrote numerous critical essays in *The Champion* and *The Remembrancer;* and, in addition to the plays already named, *The Lawyer's Feast*, a farce.

In these biographical sketches I have necessarily been carried far beyond the close of the reign of 'Good Queen Anne.' In a reign which comprehended only twelve years, it was scarcely possible for any noteworthy career to be begun and ended. Many lives which dated from an earlier period were prolonged beyond her own,—were extended into the reign of the first and even of the second George. In speaking of the Queen Anne Poets, therefore,

I have included all who produced in her time any work of merit, without confining myself to any strict chronological limits. But now, taking her death as a fixed and intelligible date, I shall endeavour to see what English writers were then alive, without regard to the measure of their achievements.

Thomas D'Urfey—if he may be placed among the illustrious company of sweet singers—was then about eighty-six years old. He was essentially a writer of the Charles the Second period, and had no sympathy with the new departure of the Augustan age. William Wycherley was seventy-four, and survived the Queen about a twelvemonth. Southern, the dramatist, was fifty-five, and Elkanah Settle, dullest of poet-laureates, sixty-six. Swift and Garth were each forty-seven; Steele and Addison forty-two; and Daniel Defoe, about fifty. John Dyer, who, in his *Grongar Hill*, was to anticipate the nature-poetry of Cowper, was about sixteen, and did not publish the poem by which he is remembered until 1726. A greater than he, Thomson, the poet of *The Seasons*, was only fourteen. Thomas Parnell was thirty-five, Elijah Fenton thirty-one, and Thomas Tickell twenty-eight. Ambrose Philips was forty-three.

William Somerville was thirty-seven years old at the death of Queen Anne, but had not ventured before the public as a writer of verse. As a bold rider, an ardent sportsman, and a stalwart county gentleman, he had enjoyed life to the uttermost; and it was not until he had impaired his constitution by jovial days and vinous nights that he addressed himself to literary pursuits. His first effort, *The Two Springs*, published in 1725, did not attract or draw public attention; but when he wrote, in vigorous blank verse, about subjects he thoroughly understood, and produced his breezy poem of *The Chase* in 1734, he found appreciative readers. It is divided into four books. The first

treats of the origin of hunting, the economy of kennels, the character and capacities of hounds, and cognate subjects. The second is devoted to hare-hunting. The third treats of hunting generally, and the fourth with the breeding and diseases of hounds, and their maladies, such as hydrophobia, which they cause. The versification is clear and strong; the descriptions often exhibit considerable skill, and are always spirited. Somerville was a Warwickshire man, and died at Henley-in-Arden, in 1742.

MATTHEW GREEN, born in 1696, was a young fellow of eighteen, with a good deal of quick ability and general culture, when George I. came to the throne. His chief poem, *The Spleen*, was not published until 1737, the year in which he died. It was one of the most original works of the day; and I am not sure that anything so good, of the same kind, is to be found in our later literature. There is something of the humour of Butler in its fluent and yet vigorous octosyllabic couplets; but the character of the thought and its mode of expression are Green's own. He was almost Pope's equal in the art of packing a thought into terse and pithy phrases. As for example:—

'To cure the mind's wrong bias, Spleen,
Some recommend the bowling-green;
Some, hilly walks; all, exercise;
Fling but a stone, the giant dies.'

'Who buzz in rhyme, and, like blind flies,
Err with their wings for want of eyes.'

'In rainy days keep double guard,
Or Spleen will surely be too hard;
Which, like those fish by sailors met,
Fly highest, while their wings are wet.'

'Reforming schemes are none of mine;
To mend the world's a vast design.
Like theirs, who tug in a little boat,
To pull to them the ship afloat,

While to defeat their laboured end,
At once both wind and stream contend.'

'Poems, the hop-grounds of the brain,
Afford the most uncertain gain.'

The ideal Home which he desires for himself is thus described:—

'Two hundred pounds, half-yearly paid,
Annuity securely made,
A farm some twenty miles from town,
Small, tight, salubrious, and my own;
Two maids, that never saw the town,
A serving man not quite a clown,
A boy to help to tread the mow,
And drive, while t'other holds the plough
A chief, of temper formed to please,
Fit to converse, and keep the keys;
And better to preserve the peace,
Commissioned by the name of niece;
With understandings of a size,
To think their master very wise,
May Heaven (it's all I wish for) send
One genial room to treat a friend,
Where decent cupboard, little plate,
Display benevolence, not state.
And may my humble dwelling stand
Upon some chosen plot of land:
A pond before, full to the brim,
Where cows may cool, and geese may swim;
Behind, a green like velvet neat,
Soft to the eye, and to the feet;
Where odorous plants in evening fair
Breathe all around ambrosial air. . . .
With opening views of hill and dale
Which sense and fancy too regale. . . .
And woods, impervious to the breeze,
Thick phalanx of embodied trees,
From hills through plains in dusk array
Extended far, repel the day.'

He lingers lovingly over the pleasures which he would

accumulate in this retreat, free from care and strife, and enjoying the calm of repose :—

> 'May I, with look ungloomed by guile,
> And wearing Virtue's livery-smile,
> Prone the distressèd to relieve,
> And little trespassers forgive,
> With income not in Fortune's power,
> And skill to make a busy hour ;
> With trips to town life to amuse,
> To purchase books and hear the news,
> To see old friends, brush off the clown,
> And quicken taste at coming down
> Unhurt by sickness' blasting rage,
> And slowly mellowing in age,
> When Fate extends its gathering gripe,
> Fall off like fruit grown fully ripe,
> Quit a worn being without pain,
> Perhaps to blossom soon again.'

Altogether, *The Spleen* is a remarkable poem : sound sense and quiet humour, most pithily and forcibly expressed.

Dr YOUNG (born in 1684) published his poem of *The Last Day* in 1713, the eleventh year of Queen Anne's reign. It exhibits the leading characteristics of the more elaborate *Night Thoughts*, by which this sententious divine and melancholy poet is chiefly known and remembered. There is the same strange mixture of the baldly prosaic with the poetically sublime—so that one is astonished how a man, who can rise to such heights, can so easily descend to such degrading depths. But with all his imagination and power of reflection and rhetorical pomp of language, Young wanted judgment ; he did not know where or what to blot. I am not quite sure that he knew when he was writing nonsense. Yet among our ethical poets he must always hold high rank, and must be considered to have treated a great subject not unworthily.

His great poem of the *Night Thoughts* appeared in 1742-1744. His satires, *The Universal Passion*—which are powerfully written—in 1725-6-7-8. His tragedies, 'Busiris,' 'The Revenge'—in which the character of Zanga was once a favourite with our tragedians—and 'The Brothers,' in 1719, 1721, and 1729 (?). Of his odes we will say nothing, except that they are probably the very worst in the language.

I quote a few lines from *The Last Day*:—

> 'When scenes are changed on this revolving earth,
> Old empires fall and give new empires birth;
> While other Bourbons rule in other lands,
> *And (if man's sins forbid not) other Annes;*
> While the still busy world is treading o'er
> The paths they trod five thousand years before,
> Thoughtless as those who now life's mazes run,
> Of earth dissolved or an extinguished sun;
> (Ye sublunary worlds, awake, awake!
> Ye rulers of the nations, hear and shake!)
> Thick clouds of darkness shall arise on day;
> In sudden night all earth's dominions lay;
> Impetuous winds the scattered forests rend;
> Eternal mountains, like their cedars, bend;
> The valleys green, the troubled ocean roar
> And break the bondage of his wonted shore;
> A sanguine stain the silver moon o'erspread;
> Darkness the circle of the sun invade;
> From inmost Heaven incessant thunders roll,
> And the stray echo bound from pole to pole.'

I shall allude to only one poet more, who, at the time of Queen Anne's death, was still a very young man—JOHN BYROM, poet, medical student, stenographer, metaphysician, theologian—a curiously interesting person, with considerable acquirements and abilities, not too well applied. Like Pope, he lisped in numbers; it was the sole respect, perhaps, in which he resembled his great contemporary. The variety of his knowledge was remarkable, but he failed to turn it to much account; and though he wrote

in fluent verse on many subjects, he never wrote with sufficient solidity or artistic power to win and hold the public ear. He wrote of medicine and shorthand, of imputed righteousness and free knowledge, of prize-fighters and physicians, of Epping and Tunbridge, of Homer and Horace, of Christmas and Easter. I suppose most readers remember him by the exquisite epigram in which he so cleverly reconciled the conflicting claims of King George and Prince Charles:—

> 'God bless the King—I mean the Faith's defender!
> God bless (no harm in blessing!) the Pretender!
> But who Pretender is—or who is King—
> God bless us all!—that's quite another thing.'

But his poem on *The Origin of Evil*—written in the same metre as Tennyson's *Two Voices*—is strongly and tersely written; and the quaintness of his stanzas on *Careless Content*, with their profusion of alliterative ornament, is—to me at least—very agreeable. I transcribe a passage, which I cannot help thinking will please the reader:—

> 'For chance or change of peace or pain,
> For fortune's favour or her frown,
> For lack or glut, for loss or gain,
> I never dodge nor up nor down,
> But swing what way the ship shall swim,
> Or tack about with equal trim.
>
> I suit not where I shall not speed,
> Nor trace the turn of every tide.
> If simple sense will not succeed,
> I make no bustling but abide.
> For shining wealth or scaring woe,
> I force no friend, I fear no foe.
>
> Of ups and downs, of ins and outs,
> Of they're-i'-th'-wrong, and we're-i'-th'-right,
> I shun the rancours and the routs;
> And wishing well to every wight,
> Whatever turn the matter takes,
> I deem it all but ducks and drakes.

With whom I feast I do not fawn,
  Nor if the folks should flout me, faint ;
If wonted welcome be withdrawn
  I cook no kind of a complaint.
With none disposed to disagree,
I like them best who best like me.

Not that I rate myself the rule
  How all my betters should behave,
But fame shall find me no man's fool,
  Nor to a set of men a slave ;
I love a friendship free and frank,
But hate to hang upon a hank.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE COFFEE-HOUSES, CLUBS, ETC.

Coffee-Houses in London—Description of an Interior—Well's—Button's—Child's—Taverns—Anecdotes—The Kit Cat Club—Calves' Head Club—Its Anthems—October Club—Beefsteak Club—Note: Newspapers.

THE Coffee-Houses played so prominent a part in the literary life of London *sub tempore Annæ*, that some reference to them is indispensable.

Coffee first came into use in England in 1650, when a Jew named Jacobs opened a coffee-house at Oxford. Two years later one was established in London by a Ragusan named Pasqua Rosa. This was in St Michael's Alley, Cornhill. The new beverage found its opponents, as all novelties do; but it made its way, and houses for the sale of it were started at several places in the commercial quarters of the capital. One of the oldest and most famous was Ward's, in Bread Street, at the sign of the Sultan Solyman's Head; then there was the Sultan Amurath's Head, in Exchange Alley; and the celebrated Rainbow, near Temple Bar. In the age before the formation of clubs, these houses drew together men of kindred tastes and objects, who found in them comfortable and convenient meeting-places, and gladly congregated to learn the news or discuss the questions of the day. The men of letters, the men of fashion, the men of commerce, had their respective rendezvous. In 1675 they were closed by proclamation, the Court having taken alarm at the extent to which they were used for political debates. But

this arbitrary measure provoked so general a discontent, that permission was soon granted to re-open them, under a severe admonition that the keepers should prevent all scandalous papers, books, and libels from being read in them, and hinder their frequenters from circulating injurious reports against the Government. Gossiping Aubrey bears witness to 'the modern advantage of coffee-houses,' before the establishment of which, he says, 'men knew not how to be acquainted, but with their own relations and societies.' In spite of the temporary check attempted by the Court, they continued, therefore, to prosper, in obedience to the old law of supply and demand. 'This way of passing time,' says Roger North, 'might have been stopped at first before people had possessed themselves of some convenience from them of meeting for short despatches and passing evenings with small expenses.' But their utility having been demonstrated by experience, the public would not consent to be deprived of the accommodation they offered. 'These houses, which are very numerous in London,' says Misson, 'are extremely convenient. You have all manner of news there: you have a good fire, which you may sit by as long as you please; you have a dish of coffee, you meet your friends for the transaction of business, and all for a penny, if you don't care to spend more.'

Steele, in the *Spectator* (No. 49), admits us to the interior of one of them:—

> I, who am at the coffee-house at six in the morning, know that my friend Beaver, the haberdasher, has a levy of more undissembled friends and admirers than most of the courtiers or generals of Great Britain. Every man about him has, perhaps, a newspaper in his hand; but none can pretend to guess what step will be taken in any one Court of Europe till Mr Beaver has thrown down his pipe, and declares what measures the Allies must enter into upon this new posture of affairs. Our coffee-house is near one of the Inns of Court, and Beaver has the audience and admiration of his neighbours from six till within a quarter of eight, at which time he is interrupted by the

students of the house ; some of whom are ready dressed for Westminster, at eight in a morning, with faces as long as if they were retained in every cause there ; and others come in their night gowns to saunter away their time, as if they never designed to go thither. I do not know that I meet in any of my walks objects which move both my spleen and laughter so effectually, as these young fellows at the Grecian, Squire's, Searle's, and all other coffee-houses adjacent to the law, who rise early for no other purpose but to publish their laziness. . . . When the day grows too busy for those gentlemen to enjoy any longer the pleasures of their *déshabille* with any manner of confidence, they give place to men who have business or good sense in their faces, and come to the coffee-house, either to transact affairs or enjoy conversation.

Externally, the Coffee-house was distinguished by a glass lantern. Internally, the furniture was limited to table, stools, and chairs of plain wood. The attraction of a pretty face was as well understood by the coffee-house keeper in the reign of Anne as it is by the publican in the reign of Victoria ; and the person who presided over the receipt of custom was generally a young woman of exceeding comeliness.

The popularity of these places of public resort may be inferred from the fact that in Queen Anne's reign London could boast of nearly three thousand. We shall glance at a few of the more celebrated.

Will's Coffee-house, so named from William Unwin, its proprietor, was situated at No. 1 Bow Street. It was sacred to polite letters.

There the talk was about poetical justice, and the unities of place and time. There was a faction for Perrault and the moderns, a faction for Boileau and the ancients. One group debated whether *Paradise Lost* ought not to have been in rhyme. To another an envious poetaster demonstrated that 'Venice Preserved' ought to have been hooted from the stage. Under no roof was a greater variety of figures to be seen. There were earls in stars and garters, clergymen in cassocks and bands, pert templars, sheepish lads from the universities, translators and index-makers in ragged coats of frieze. The great press was to get near the chair where John Dryden sate.

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In winter that chair was always in the warmest nook by the fire; in summer it stood in the balcony. To bow to the laureate, and to hear his opinion of Racine's last tragedy, or of Bossu's treatise on epic poetry, was thought a privilege. A pinch from his snuff-box was an honour sufficient to turn the head of a young enthusiast.[1]

It was here that Pope saw the great poet whom he took as his exemplar; and an old story is still extant, that Dryden gave him a shilling for translating the Ovidian episode of Pyramus and Thisbe. Pope describes him as 'a plump man with a down look, and not very conversible.'

Will's was Pope's favourite coffee-house after his rupture with Addison.

Button's, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, was the headquarters of Addison and his coterie—Steele, Tickell, Budgell, Prior, Gay, and Halifax. Here were received communications for Steele's paper, *The Guardian*. Letters were inserted into 'the Lion's Head,' which was modelled after the celebrated lion at Venice, and is now in the possession of the Duke of Bedford, at Woburn Abbey. We first read of it in No. 98 of *The Guardian*.

I would have all [my correspondents] know, that on the 20th inst. [July 1713] it is my intention to erect a lion's head in imitation of those in Venice, through which all the private intelligence of that commonwealth is said to pass. This head is to open a most wide and voracious mouth, which shall take in such letters and papers as are conveyed to me by correspondents, it being my resolution to have a particular regard to all such matters as come to my hands through the mouth of the lion. There will be under it a box, of which the key will be in my own custody, to receive such papers as are dropped into it. Whatever the lion swallows I shall digest for the use of the public. This head requires some time to finish, the workman being resolved to give it several masterly touches, and to represent

[1] In Pepys' *Diary* we read (Feb. 3, 1664):—'In Covent Garden to-night, going to fetch my wife, I stopped at the great coffee-house there, where I never was before; where Dryden the poet, I knew at Cambridge, and all the wits of the town, and Harris the player, and Mr Hooke, of our college. And, had I time then, or could at other times, it will be good coming thither, for there, I perceive, is very witty and pleasant discussion.'

it as ravenous as possible. It will be set up in Button's coffee-house in Covent Garden, who is directed to show the way to the Lion's Head, and to instruct any young author how to convey his works into the mouth of it with safety and secrecy.

There is a further reference in No. 140:—

I have lately received a letter from an astrologer in Moorfields, which I have read with great satisfaction. He observes to me, that my lion at Button's coffee-house was very luckily erected in the very month when the sun was in Leo. He further adds, that upon conversing with the above-mentioned Mr Button (whose other name, he observes, is Daniel, a good omen still with regard to the lion his co-habitant), he had discovered the very hour in which the said lion was set up; and that by the help of other lights, which he had received from the said Mr Button, he had been enabled to calculate the nativity of the lion.

Garraway's is now famous as the resort of commercial men. Two centuries ago it was frequented by surgeons and apothecaries, and thither went daily, at the hour when the Exchange was full, Dr John Radcliffe, the then most fashionable physician in London.

Child's, in St Paul's Churchyard, was afterwards the haunt of the physicians, and also of the members of the clerical profession.

'A young divine,' says the *Spectator* (No. 609), 'after his first degree in the University, usually comes hither only to show himself, and on that occasion he is apt to think he is but half equipped with a gown and cassock for his public appearance, if he hath not the additional ornament of a scarf of the first magnitude to entitle him to the appellation of Doctor from his landlady and the boy at Child's.'

Addison includes it among the houses visited by the *Spectator* (No. 1):—

Sometimes I am seen thrusting my head into a crowd of politicians at Will's, and listening with attention to the narratives that are made in those little circular audiences. Sometimes I smoke a pipe at Child's, and whilst I seem attentive to nothing but the postman, overhear the conversation of every talk in the room. I appear on Sundays at St James's Coffee-House, and sometimes join the little committee of Politics in the inner room, as one who comes

there to hear and improve. My face is likewise very well known at the Grecian, the Cocoa Tree, and in the theatres both of Drury Lane and the Haymarket.

The Grecian, thus alluded to, was kept by a Greek, named Constantine. It was situated in Devereux Court, Temple, and being much patronised by lawyers and physicists—Sir Isaac Newton was an occasional visitor—Steele, in his prospectus of the *Tatler*, announces that all learned papers will appear under the title of *The Grecian.*

'Foreign and domestic news you will have,' says Steele, 'from St James's,' in St James's Street, which was kept by a man named Elliot, and was Swift's head-quarters. He had his letters left there.

Lloyd's, in Lombard Street, where sales of wines and ships were conducted, and maritime news received and posted up, suggests an amusing paper (by Addison) in the *Spectator* (No. 46):—

About a week since, there happened to me a very odd accident, by reason of one of my papers of minutes which I had accidentally dropped at Lloyd's Coffee-House, where the auctions are usually kept. Before I missed it, there were a cluster of people who had found it, and were diverting themselves with it at one end of the coffee-house; it had raised so much laughter among them before I observed what they were about, that I had not the courage to own it. The boy of the coffee-house, when they had done with it, carried it about in his hand, asking everybody if they had dropped a certain paper; but nobody challenging it, he was ordered by those merry gentlemen who had before perused it to get up into the auction-pulpit, and read it to the whole room, that if any one would own it they might.

The *Spectator* also alludes to Squire's (in Fulwood's Rents, Holborn), where Sir Roger de Coverley invites him 'to smoke a pipe over a dish of coffee':—

As I love the old man, I take a delight in complying with everything that is agreeable to him, and accordingly waited on him to the coffee-house, where his venerable figure drew upon us the eyes of the whole room. He had no sooner seated himself at the upper end

of the high table but he called for a clean pipe, a paper of tobacco, a dish of coffee, a wax candle, and the supplement, with such an air of cheerfulness and good humour, that all the boys in the coffee-room (who seemed to take pleasure in serving him) were at once employed on his several errands, insomuch that nobody else could come at a dish of tea till the knight had got all his conveniences about him.

White's was a chocolate-house; it was founded in 1698, in St James's Street, and burnt down in 1723. Another chocolate-house, The Cocoa Tree, was also situated in St James's Street (No. 87). It was patronised exclusively by Tories.

From Coffee-Houses, by way of contrast, we pass to Taverns, which were not under such rigid regulations then as they are now, and were too frequently disgraced by exhibitions of scandalous licence.

'A tavern,' says Tom Brown, 'is a little Sodom, where as many vices are daily practised as ever were known in the great one. Thither libertines repair to drink away their brains, aldermen to talk treason and bewail the loss of trade; saints to elevate the spirit, hatch calumnies, coin false news, and reproach the Church; gamesters to shake their elbows. Thither sober knaves walk with drunken fools to make cunning bargains and over-reach them in their dealings. Thither young quality retire to spend their tradesmen's money. Thither bullies coach it to kick drawers, and invent new oaths and curses. Thither run sots purely to be drunk, beaus to show their vanity, cowards to make themselves valiant by the strength of their wine, fools to make themselves witty in their own conceit, and spend-thrifts to be made miserable by a ridiculous consumption of their own fortunes.'

But the taverns were patronised also by a higher class, by noblemen and gentlemen, and by men of the learned professions. These visitors, however, seem to have used their own wine. Thus Swift writes to Stella, that he dined at a tavern with Lords Harley and Dupplin, the son and son-in-law of the Earl of Oxford, the Lord Treasurer, and that they sent to the Lord Treasurer's for their wine.

Among the principal London taverns in the days of Good Queen Anne were—

'The Devil and Dragon,' in Fleet Street, the site of which is now occupied by Childs's famous banking-house. Here, a century earlier, Ben Jonson and his friends were accustomed to make merry; and even in the times we speak of the rules of Ben's Club—his *Leges Convivales*—still glittered in letters of gold on the wall over the chimney-piece in the Apollo room. A 'Young Devil,' where for some months in 1708-1709 the Society of Antiquaries held their meetings, was opened on the other side of that busy street which Dr Johnson loved so well. About equal to one another in popularity were 'The Rummer,' at Charing Cross, the host of which was worthy Samuel Prior, the genial uncle of the poet, wit, and diplomatist; 'The Crown and Anchor,' in the Strand, where the Royal Academy of Music was founded in 1710; 'The Mitre,' in Mitre Court; 'The Cock,' in Fleet Street—associated with Sir Charles Sedley's indecent extravagance—which, in the Victorian age, has been immortalised by Tennyson; 'The Boar's Head,' East Cheap, with its Shakespearian memories; 'The Three Cranes,' in the Vintry, once frequented by rare Ben Jonson; 'The King's Head,' over against the Inner Temple Gate, where Shaftesbury and his friends, in Charles II.'s reign, held their secret councils; 'Dolly's' chop-house, in Paternoster Row; and 'The Salutation,' in Newgate Street, the favourite resort, while he was rebuilding London, of Sir Christopher Wren.

The gregarious habits of society in the Augustan age, which made the coffee-house so popular an institution, necessarily favoured the development of club-life. To enumerate all the clubs that then sprang into existence would be impossible, since every small provincial town, and in London almost every street, had its own particular club. But we may infer their popularity, and also the occasional oddity of their appellations, from the sugges-

tions for new clubs which are not of infrequent occurrence in *The Spectator*. In our own day it would not be feasible for statesmen and divines, poets and lawyers, men of wit and men of fashion, to spend, as their great-great-grandfathers did, three-fourths of the twenty-four hours in the tavern or the coffee-house. But we must remember that in the times we speak of even the busiest men had abundant leisure; and that the pressure of political, or commercial, or professional life was far from being as severe as it now is. The progress of public affairs was slow and measured; no electric wire flashed from all parts of the world a constant succession of important news; the game of politics was played with an almost incredible amount of deliberation; books and plays appeared at wide intervals; there was time for everything, and a good deal of time with nothing to occupy it. In such circumstances the club could not fail to be popular among the privileged classes. And when men, as Addison remarks, are knit thus together by a love of society, not a spirit of faction, and do not meet to censure those that are absent, but to enjoy one another; when they are thus combined for their own improvement, or for the good of others, or at least to relax themselves from the business of the day by an innocent and cheerful conversation, there may be—and there was—something very useful in these little institutions and establishments.[1]

The KIT CAT Club, says the same authority, is said to have taken its original from a mutton-pie. The truth seems to be that it was founded by the well-known bookseller, Jacob Tonson; that it first assembled at the Fountain Tavern, in the Strand; and that a favourite dish with its members was the mutton-pies fabricated by a certain Christopher Cat. Sir Richard Blackmore, in his poem on *The Kit-Cats* (1708), gives the following very distinct information:—

[1] See the *Spectator*, No. IX.

'One night in seven, at this convenient seat,
Indulgent Bocaj [Jacob] did the Muses treat,
Their drink was generous wine, and Kit-Cat's pies their meat.
Here he assembled his poetic tribe,
Past labours to reward, and new ones to prescribe.
Hence did th' Assembly's title first arise,
And Kit-Cat wits sprung first from Kit-Cat's pies.
Bocaj, the mighty founder of the State,
Led by his wisdom, or his happy fate,
Chose proper pillars to support its weight.
All the first members for their place were fit,
Though not of title, men of sense and wit.'

It was long considered a distinction to be enrolled in the membership of this club; and 'men of title' competed with 'men of wit' for the honour. The 'toasts' to popular beauties—and others—proposed by its members, were engraved on their drinking glasses—a custom which suggested Dr Arbuthnot's well-known epigram:—

'Whence deathless Kit-Cat took his name
Few critics can unriddle:
Some say from pastry cook it came,
And some from Cat and Fiddle.
From no trim beaux its name it boasts,
Grey statesmen or green wits,
But from this pell-mell pack of toasts
Of—old Cats and young Kits.'

To Jacob Tonson forty-six members of the club presented their portraits, painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller, to embellish a room which he had built, adjoining his house at Barn Elms, for the club meetings. Among them were 'the proud Duke of Somerset,' the Earl of Dorset, Lord Somers, Montague, Walpole, Dryden, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Addison, Steele, and Blackmore. They were all of uniform dimensions—thirty-six inches by twenty-eight inches—a measurement still known as Kit-cat size. The whole series is now preserved at Bayfordbury, Herts. The heads are for the most part good, manly likenesses, a little monotonous perhaps, and as pictures somewhat

slight, whilst the costume is that curious mingling of stiff curled and powdered full-bottomed perukes, lace cravats and ruffles, or open necks and loosely flowing robes, usual in Kneller's male portraits.

Political fanaticism presided over the incubation of the once famous CALVES' HEAD Club, which held its secret meetings in the reign of Anne, but probably died out soon after the accession of George I.[1] Little is known of it except through the dubious medium of an anonymous pamphleteer, who published, in 1703, what he called the secret history of 'The Calves' Head Club: or, The Republican Unmasked. Wherein is fully shown the Religion of the Calves' Head Heroes, in their Anniversary Thanksgiving Songs on the 30th of January, by them called Anthems, for the Years 1693, 1694, 1695, 1696, 1697. Now Published to demonstrate the restless inplacable spirit of a certain Party still amongst us, who are never to be satisfied until the present Establishment in Church and State is subverted.'

This is a *libellus* of twenty-two pages, of which scarcely one half is occupied with the Secret History. The author states that 'after the Restoration the eyes of the Government being upon the whole party, they were obliged to meet with a great deal of precaution, but now they meet almost in a public manner, and apprehend nothing.' The evidence he adduces respecting these conclaves is not, however, very satisfactory; it is, indeed, simply hearsay testimony.

'Happening in the late reign,' he says, 'to be in the company of a certain active Whig, who in all other respects was a man of probity enough, he assured me that, to his knowledge, 'twas true—that he knew most of the members of that club, and that he had been often invited to their meetings, but that he had always avoided them. Further, he stated that Milton and other creatures of the Common-

[1] It seems to have been revived early in the following reign.

wealth had instituted this club, as he was informed, in opposition to Bishop Juxon, Dr Sanderson, Dr Hammond, and other divines of the Church of England, who met privately every 30th of January, and though it was under the time of the usurpation, had compiled a private form of service of the day, not much different from what we now find in the Liturgy.'

The insinuation about Milton may be dismissed as baseless; though it is not easy to see why the Commonwealth men should not have been at liberty like the Royalists to commemorate the anniversary of a day which was equally momentous to them as to their adversaries.

'By another gentleman,' continues the anonymous author, 'who about eight years ago went, out of mere curiosity, to their club, I was informed that it was kept in no fixed house, but that they removed as they saw convenient; that the place they met in when he was with them was in a blind alley about Moorfields; that the company wholly consisted of Independents and Anabaptists (I am glad for the honour of the Presbyterians to set down this remark); that the famous Jerry White, formerly chaplain to Oliver Cromwell (who, no doubt on't, came to sanctify with his pious exhortations the ribaldry of the day), said grace; that, after the cloth was removed, the anniversary anthem, as they impiously called it, was sung, and a calf's skull filled with wine or other liquor, and then a brimmer, went round to the pious memory of those worthy patriots who had killed the tyrant and delivered the country from his arbitrary sway.'

In a later edition, that of 1713, additional details were furnished, and we read of an axe being hung up in the club-room, and reverenced as a principal symbol in 'this diabolical sacrament.' The bill of fare was—

'A large dish of calves' heads, dressed several ways, by which they represented the king and his friends, who had suffered in his cause; a large pike, with a small one in his mouth, as an emblem of tyranny; a large cod's head, by which they pretended to represent the person of the king singly; a boar's head, with an apple in its mouth, to represent the king by this, as bestial, as by their other hieroglyphics, they had done foolish and tryannical. After the repast was over, one of their elders presented an Eikon Basilike, which was with great solemnity burned upon the table, whilst the anthems were singing

After this, another produced Milton's *Defensio Populi Anglicani*, upon which all laid their hands, and made a protestation in the form of an oath, for ever to stand by and maintain the same.'

Of the anthems sung upon these occasions, five are given in an appendix. From that for 1696, we extract the following lines, referring, of course, to Charles I. and Charles II.:—

'This Monarch wore a peakèd beard, and seemed a doughty hero,
As Diocletian, innocent, and merciful as Nero.
The Church's darling implement, but scourge of all the people,
He swore he make each mother's son adore their idol steeple.
But they perceiving his designs, grew plaguy shy and jealous,
And timely chopped his calf's head off and sent him to his fellows.
Old Rowley did succeed his dad, such a king was never seen a,
He'd lie with every nasty drab but seldom with his queen a;
His dogs at council board would sit, like judges in their furs a,
'Twas hard to say which had most wit, the monarch or his curs a.
At last he died, we know not how, but most think by his brother,
His soul to royal Tophet went, to see his dad and mother.
The previous James usurped the throne to pull Religion down—a
But by his wife and priest undone, he quickly lost his crown a.'

Nine editions of this pamphlet appeared between 1703 and 1716. To the fifth are appended three additional songs, with 'Reflections upon each of the eight,' and a 'Vindication of the Royal Martyr, Charles I., wherein are laid open the Republicans' Mysteries of Rebellion, written in the time of the Usurpation, by the celebrated Mr Butler, author of *Hudibras;* with a character of a Presbyterian by Sir John Denham, Knight.' Needless to say that the names of Butler and Denham have been taken in vain. The sixth edition is ornamented with an engraving, representing the interior of a coffee-room or club-room, with an axe hung up against the wainscot. A man in clerical attire is saying grace; a black personage, with horns on his head, is looking in from behind; and from under the table projects a female figure, with snakes among her hair. In the eighth edition the text is enlarged to 224 pages.

We pass on to the OCTOBER Club, a political club on the Tory side, which derived its name from the bright 'October Ale' quaffed by its members. It assembled at the Bell Tavern, in King Street, Westminster. In Swift's writings, during his Whiggish period, occur several references to it. Under the date of Feb. 18, 1711, he says:—'We are plagued here with an October Club; that is, a set of above a hundred Parliament men of the country, who drink October beer at home, and meet every evening at a tavern near the Parliament, to consult affairs, and drive things on to extremes against the Whigs, to call the old Ministry to account, and get off five or six heads.' To make them more rational he wrote his twopenny pamphlet, *Some Advice Humbly Offered to the Members of the October Club, in a Letter from a Person of Quality*. In 1714 it numbered about a hundred and fifty members.

There were also the BEEFSTEAK and SATURDAY Clubs, and many others of a social and convivial character, to which the late Mr Timbs has done justice in his *Club Life in London*. The Beefsteak Club owed its origin to Lord Peterborough's enjoyment of an impromptu dinner served up in Manager Rich's scene-room, at Covent Garden Theatre. The original gridiron on which Rich broiled the peer's steak is still preserved among the treasures of the Club, and is engraved on the buttons worn by the members.

NOTE.—NEWSPAPERS.

Periodical papers first came into use in England during the Civil War, when the progress of public affairs was recorded in the weekly *News-books* issued by both parties. Thus we find *News from Hull*, *Truths from York*, *The Parliament Kite*, *The Scots' Dove*. As the sentiment of opposition deepened, this early journalism exhibited a stronger and more open rivalry. *Democritus ridens* replied to *Heraclitus ridens*; *The Weekly Discoverer* met his match in *The Discoverer Stript Naked*; *Mercurius Britannicus* was assailed by *Mercurius Mastix*. It may be noted that *Mercury* was the popular title of these weekly intelligencers, the principles of the writer being

indicated by some distinctive epithet. Marchmont Needham was the founder of the *Mercurius Britannicus*, as also of the *Mercurius Pragmaticus* and *Mercurius Politicus*. Sir John Birkenhead provided the Royalists with the *Mercurius Aulicus*. Then came Sir Roger L'Estrange, who, in 1663, was appointed licenser or censor of the press, and acquired a monopoly of the printing and publication of news. He availed himself of this monopoly to produce his newspaper *The Public Intelligencer*, which, in 1679, was succeeded by *The Observator*.

The Licensing Act expired in 1679. Any person thereafter might print at his own risk a history, a sermon, or a poem, without any official *imprimatur*; but the judges decided that this liberty did not extend to Gazettes, and that, by the common law of England, no man, unless authorised by the Crown, had a right to publish political news. While the Whig party continued influential this rule was frequently violated, and the Government thought it advisable to shut their eyes to the violation. During the great struggle on the Exclusion Bill many newspapers were suffered to appear, the *Protestant Intelligencer*, the *Current Intelligencer*, the *Domestic Intelligencer*, the *True News*, the *London Mercury*, none of which were published oftener than twice a week, or exceeded in size a single small leaf. Towards the close of Charles II.'s reign, however, no other newspaper was permitted than the *London Gazette*, which came out twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays.

In the capital, the want of political news-sheets was supplied by the coffee-houses, whither the people regularly flocked to hear the news. In the provinces they could be informed of the events that transpired or the rumours that flourished, only by means of news-letters. 'To prepare such letters became a calling in London, as it now is among the natives of India. The news-writer rambled from coffee-room to coffee-room, collecting reports, squeezed himself into the Sessions House at the Old Bailey if there was an interesting trial, nay, perhaps, obtained admission to the gallery of Whitehall, and noticed how the King and Duke looked. In this way he gathered materials for weekly epistles destined to enlighten some county town or some bench of rustic magistrates.'

After the Revolution the news-letter rapidly died out, and the newspaper assumed a permanent form. As yet, however, it exercised no political or social influence, and the men who contributed to its columns were hack writers of little character and less ability. At the accession of Anne the metropolitan journals in existence were ten in number:—*London Post*,[1] *English Post*, *Postman*, *Postboy*, *Post Angel*, *Flying Post*, *London Gazette*, *Dyer's News Letter*, and *Dawks's News Letter*, the last-named being printed in running type to resemble manuscript. Each of them was published thrice a week. Three days after Anne's accession came out the first daily paper (March 11, 1702), *The Daily Courant*.[2] It measured fourteen inches by eight inches, and at first was printed only on one side; but when

[1] The *London Post*, in which *Robinson Crusoe* was published, appeared in 1715.

[2] A daily paper, the *Post Boy*, had been started in 1695, but lived only three days.

it became the property of Mr Samuel Buckley, the publisher of the *Spectator*, the blank page was soon filled up with advertisements.

The other newspapers founded in Queen Anne's reign—newspapers as distinguished from what we now term periodicals—were *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, *Evening Courant*, *British Mercury*, *Weekly Review*,[1] *Observator*, *Monthly Register*, *Letter Writer*, *Whitehall*, *News Letter*, *Mercurius Politicus*, *St James's*, *Evening Post*, *Protestant Postboy*, *Night Post*, *Useful Intelligencer*, *The Mercator*, *Britain*, *Monitor*, *Englishman*, *Reconciler*, *Controller*, *Weekly Packet*, and *Patriot*.

The imposition of a halfpenny stamp tax in 1711 caused a great mortality among these papers.

The class of writers who purveyed the news for their slender columns was humorously described by Steele in an early number of the *Tatler*:—

'There is another sort of gentlemen,' he says, 'whom I am much more concerned for, and that is the ingenious fraternity of which I have the honour to be an unworthy member; I mean the News Writers of Great Britain, whether Post Men or Post Boys, or by what other name or title soever dignified or distinguished. The case of these gentlemen is, I think, more hard than that of the soldiers, considering they have taken more towns and fought more battles. They have been upon parties and skirmishes where our armies have lain still, and given the general assault to many a place where the besiegers were quiet in their trenches. They have made us masters of several strong towns many weeks before our generals could do it, and completed victories when our greatest captains have been glad to come off with a drawn battle. Where Prince Eugene has slain his thousands, Boyer has slain his ten thousands. This gentleman can indeed be never enough commended for his courage and intrepidity during the whole war. He has laid about him with an irrepressible fury: and, like the offended Marius of ancient Rome, made such havoc among his countrymen as must be the work of two or three ages to repair. It must be confessed the redoubted Mr Buckley has shed as much blood as the former; but I cannot forbear saying (and I hope it will not look like envy) that we regard our brother Buckley as a kind of Drawcansir, who spares neither friend nor foe, but generally kills as many of his own side as the enemies'. It is impossible for this ingenious sort of men to subsist after a peace: every one remembers the shifts they were driven to in the reign of King Charles the Second, when they could not furnish out a single paper of news without lighting up a comet in Germany, or a fire in Moscow. There scarce appeared a letter without a paragraph on an earthquake. Prodigies were grown so familiar that they had lost their name, as a great poet of that age has it. I remember Mr Dyer, who is justly looked upon by all foxhunters in the nation as the greatest statesman our country has produced, was particularly famous for dealing in whales; insomuch that in five months' time (for I had the curiosity to examine his letters on that occasion) he brought three into the mouth of the River Thames, besides two porpoises and a

[1] *Review of the Affairs of State* (1709), edited by Daniel Defoe.

sturgeon. The judicious and wary Mr Ichabod Dawks hath all along been the rival of this great writer, and got himself a reputation from plagues and famines: by which, in those days, he destroyed as great multitudes as has lately done by the sword. In every dearth of news, Grand Cairo was sure to be unpeopled.'

Devoted to lighter literature were *The British Apollo; or, Curious Amusements for the Ingenious; The Medley; The Hermit; The Diverting Post; The Rehearsal; Kensington; The Weekly Comedy; Humours of a Coffee House; The Plain Dealer; The Reconciler; The Lover;* besides the immortal *Spectator*, *Tatler*, *Guardian*, and *Examiner*.

Among the provincial journals which first saw the light in Anne's reign were *The Newcastle Courant*, 1711; *Liverpool Courant*, 1711; *Hereford Journal*, 1713; and *York Mercury*, 1713. *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 1690, and *The Stamford Mercury*, 1695, were already in existence. The Scotch papers (in addition to the *Mercurius Caledonius*, 1661, and *The Edinburgh Gazette*, 1699) were *The Scots Courant*, 1706; *The Edinburgh Flying Post*, 1708; and *The Scots Postman*, 1709.

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